THE PERFECT WAY;

OR,

THE FINDING OF CHRIST.

Presentation Edition.

THE PERFECT WAY;

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THE FINDING OF CHRIST.

BY

ANNA (BONUS) KINGSFORD

(M.D. OF THE FACULTY OF PARIS)

AND

EDWARD MAITLAND

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FOURTH EDITION, WITH ADDITIONS.

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JANE (MILLER) FISHER

Presentation Edition

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

"Make me to know the way wherein I should walk: for to Thee have I lifted up my soul. . . .

"Thy good Spirit shall lead me into the right land."—PSALM cxliii. 8, 10.

"I will give thee understanding, and will instruct thee in the way wherein thou shalt go."—PSALM xxxii. 9.

"He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve Me."—PSALM ci. 6.

"Be ye therefore perfect."—MATT. v. 48.

THE nine lectures which constituted the First Edition of this book were delivered by Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland before a private audience, in the months of May, June and July, 1881: and were published anonymously, under the title of *The Perfect Way; or, The Finding of Christ*, in the following winter.

They represent, as the full title of the book denotes, the doctrine that by "Christ" is designated neither a person merely historical nor one supernatural: but the type of the highest possibilities of humanity, the summit of the ladder of evolution where "the manhood" is taken "unto God," and man melts into, and blends with, and becomes one

with Divinity, and "God and Man is one Christ":[1] for the attainment of the Divine Union—which alone constitutes perfection—is open to all persons. And they represent this supreme point of perfection as attainable through, and only through, the following of a perfect ideal of life in all things appertaining to Man in each department of his fourfold nature, namely, in body, mind, soul and spirit. This great truth is symbolised by the Catholic Church in the Mass, when the Priest mixes a *little* Water—representing Humanity—with the Wine—representing Divinity—in the Chalice, *the Water having been previously sanctified* and so made worthy to be taken up and lost in the substance of the Wine about to be consecrated; the Priest at the same time praying on behalf of himself and of the congregation that by the mystery represented by this Water and Wine they may be made partakers of the Divinity of Jesus Christ who vouchsafed to become partaker of our Humanity.

The Perfect Way was "designed to exhibit the *process* of the interior perfectionment of the individual—the process, that is, whereby 'Christ' becomes 'Christ'—and thereby to interpret the Christ: it did not come within the scope of this book to elaborate the various practical *applications* of its doctrine, if only for the reason that, when once the spirit of the man is perfected, conduct will order itself accordingly."[2] But two practical applications are emphasised, namely, as regards Vegetarianism and Vivisection. "The former is insisted on as essential to the full apprehension and realisation of

[1] Creed of St. Athanasius. See also App. No. III.
[2] E. M., letter to *Literary Guide*, 15th October, 1890.

the ideal implied by the term 'Christ'—among other reasons for its sensitising influence on the higher planes of the consciousness: and the latter is unsparingly denounced as constituting a total repudiation of that ideal by its suppression of the higher self in favour of the lower as the rule of conduct."[3] For—

> "There is a path which no bird of prey knoweth,
> And which the vulture's eye hath not seen:
> The lion's whelps have not trodden it,
> Nor the fierce lion passed by it."[4]

The Perfect Way represents and is the product of a *Divine Revelation*: a Revelation in the direction of Mysticism: a Revelation which has restored to the World "that famous system of cosmogony which—known to initiates as the Hermetic Gnosis—has from the remotest antiquity been venerated as the one true divine revelation concerning the nature of man and the universe; and which constituted the core and substance of all sacred scriptures, mysteries, and religions — Brahminism and Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Osirisism, Mithraism, Hellenism, Judaism and Christianity, being in turn designed as vehicles for and expressions of it; but in each of which its true meaning became perverted, obscured, and finally lost to view behind the forms in which it was presented, and the religion degraded into an idolatry through the substitution, as the objects of worship, of its material symbols for its spiritual realities." And it represents a discovery of "the interpretation of these forms —together with the spiritual facts to which they correspond

[3] E. M., letter to *Literary Guide*, 15th October, 1890.

[4] Job xxviii. 7, 8.

—to the full explication of Christianity, its identification with the Gnosis, and, consequently, its vindication as constituting, when rightly apprehended, a true science of divine things, and therein a perfect system of thought and rule of life."[5] It claims thus to be "both Christian and Catholic in their original and true sense."[6] In fact, the Gnosis finds "its fullest and most perfect formulation by the mouth and in the dogmas of the Catholic Church."[7] "The Initiate has no quarrel with the true Christian religion or with its symbolism, but only with the current orthodox interpretation of that religion and symbolism."[8]

"The Gnosis, while *in* the world, has never" (prior to the publication of *The Perfect Way*) "really been given *to* the world, or presented under a form which would render it comprehensible *by* the world, but has been reserved for initiates *pledged to secrecy*, and concealed under symbols to the interpretation of which they alone had the key. It is in part because this key has been lost, or so carefully concealed as to be no longer available—even for initiates themselves, as would appear to be the case—and because only by a new illumination could it be restored," that such a Revelation became necessary.[9]

In a recently published book, a well-known writer says

[5] E. M.'s MS., preface to an American edition of *P. W.*

[6] Lect I., 42.

[7] A. K.'s MS., "Les Rois Mages Mystiques."

[8] A. K., letter to President of T.S. (Madras), 31st October, 1883; and see *C. W.S.*, p. 198, n. (5).

[9] E. M.'s MS., preface to an American edition of *P. W.*; and see Lect. II., 12; VII., 49.

that "the great need of to-day" is "a complete reformation in Christian interpretation, a re-casting of popular exegesis, a re-moulding of Christian teaching in pulpit, school, and college."[10] More than twenty years ago, Anna Kingsford expressed a similar opinion; she said: "It is not so much the revelation of a new religious system that is needed here, as a true interpretation of the religion now existing."[11] The revelation contained in the pages of *The Perfect Way* supplies this great need of a true interpretation of the Christian religion. It was given for the express purpose of rescuing religion from the perversion it had undergone at the hands of a materialising priesthood, by interpreting it, and re-establishing it as a verity purely spiritual and wholly reasonable, and so carrying on the spiritual consciousness of the race to a new and higher stage of its evolution.[12] "The end in view is not denial, but interpretation; not destruction, but reconstruction, and this with the very materials hitherto in use."[13] No new Gospel of Salvation was necessary or possible, but a new Gospel of Interpretation was indispensable.

In her Presidential Address to the British Theosophical Society, on the 17th July, 1883, Anna Kingsford said: "We proffer an Eirenicon to all Churches, claiming, that once the veil of symbolism is lifted from the divine face of Truth, all Churches are akin, and the basic doctrine of all is identical

[10] *Deep Breathing*, by Arthur Lovell, p. 28.

[11] Letter to President of T.S. (Madras), 31st October, 1883; see also App. No. III.

[12] E. M., letter to R., 3rd May, 1891; and see Lect. II., 44.

[13] Lect. I., 56.

. . . . Greek, Hermetic, Buddhist, Vedantist,[14] Christian—all these Lodges of the Mysteries are fundamentally one and identical in doctrine. . . . We hold that no single ecclesiastical creed is comprehensible by itself alone, uninterpreted by its predecessors and its contemporaries. Students, for example, of Christian theology will only learn to understand and to appreciate the true value and significance of the symbols familiar to them, by the study of Eastern Philosophy and Pagan Idealism. For Christianity is the heir of these, and she draws her best blood from their veins. And, forasmuch as all her great ancestors hid beneath their exoteric formulas and rites—themselves mere husks and shells to amuse the simple-minded—the esoteric or concealed verities reserved for the initiate, so also she reserves for earnest seekers and deep thinkers the true interior Mysteries which are one and eternal in all creeds and Churches from the foundation of the world. This true, interior, transcendental meaning is the Real Presence, veiled in the elements of the Divine Sacrament: the mystical Substance and Truth figured beneath the Bread and the Wine of the ancient Bacchic orgies, and now of our own Catholic Church. To the unwise, the unthinking, the superstitious, the gross elements are the objects of the rite; to the initiate, the seer, the son of Hermes, they are but the outward and visible signs of

[14] A careful and an erudite student of the Hindû Scriptures said that *The Perfect Way* contained "passages identical with some which he had rendered from the Upanishads, but of which no translation had ever been published; and he accounted for the coincidence by supposing an identical illumination for both" (*Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 287).

that which is ever and of necessity, inward, spiritual, and occult."[15]

The line of thought introduced by *The Perfect Way*, therefore, "is not more friendly to the popular presentation of orthodox Church doctrine than to the fashionable agnosticism of the hour. It represents, indeed, a revolt against all conventional forms of belief, whether ecclesiastical or secular, and a conviction that the rehabilitation of religion on reasonable and scientific grounds is not only possible to the human mind, but is essential to human progress and development."[16] "Of one thing," said Anna Kingsford, "I am sure, and that is, that there is not, and cannot be, any half-way house between Atheism and that doctrine which I have."[17]

It is necessary to understand what is meant by "Mysticism" and "Mystics." In its true sense, "Mystery" denotes, not something that transcends and contradicts reason and exalts authority in the place of understanding, but that which, being interior, hidden, and spiritual, requires the application of reason to a higher plane than the exterior, phenomenal, and sensible.[18] Mysticism is Substantialism, and is the opposite to Materialism. The true plane of religious belief is subjective and spiritual, not objective and physical. Mystics speak *from within*, which implies

[15] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 125.

[16] A. K., letter in *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1884. See *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 185, and Lect. I., 12.

[17] A. K., Diary, 13th November, 1881. See *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 40.

[18] E. M., letter in *Light*, 1892, p. 620.

experience; not, as do the multitudes, *from without*, as spectators merely. Mystics are "those who, in virtue of their own spiritual maturity and development, have been enabled to transcend the outer and lower spheres of the consciousness, the material and the astral, and to attain to the inner and upper, the kingdom within of the soul and spirit, and who are able, therefore, to discern the principles of things, where others can discern things only, and thus know the realities of which things are the appearance."[19] "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee," said pious Job:[20] and it was as a Mystic that David spoke, when he said: "The uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom Thou hast made manifest unto me."[21]

From the foregoing, it will be seen that Mysticism has been correctly defined as "*experiential* Theosophy." While Theosophy, "in its broader signification, represents and includes the entire range of Transcendentalism, the Science of the Mystic is strictly and finely *spiritual*. It is the science of the Saint rather than of the Adept, and occupies itself immediately and concentratively with the interests of the Soul, and the aspirations of the Heart. It takes scant account of occult physics and dynamics, or of the intellectual ceremonials of *la Haute Magie*. In intent and scope, it is interpretative rather than exegetic or constructive, and occupies itself with the conversion of the exoteric, material, and general formulæ of faith and doctrine into esoteric,

[19] E. M., letter in *Light*, 1894, p. 477; and see Lect. V., 29.
[20] Job xlii. 5.
[21] Psalm l. 7.

spiritual, and particular meanings, enfranchising the concerns and interests of the Soul from the bondage of the Letter and the Form, and lifting the plane of belief from the level of Tradition to that of Revelation. Thus the religion of the Mystic is essentially *spiritual*, and all its articles relate to interior conditions, principles, and processes. It is based upon experimental knowledge, not on authority, and its central figures are attributes, qualities, and sacraments (mysteries), not persons nor events, however great or remarkable. These latter, with all the material accessories and accidents they imply, are by the Mystic regarded as constituting the *Vehicle*, not the essential element of religion, since they are not, and cannot be noumenal or absolutes."[22]

Just as there were many who saw no necessity for the further unfoldment of the spiritual consciousness represented by Christianity, and resented the introduction of that religion; so there are, and must be, many who similarly object to the further unfoldment of Christianity, represented by a movement in the direction of Mysticism.[23] It is necessary, therefore, again to emphasise the fact that this book of "the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God" was written for the "educated and developed," rather than for the uninstructed and undeveloped.[24] It was "not written for those who are so well content with what they already have of divine knowledges, as to desire no more;" but it was "written for those who thirst after such knowledges,

[22] A. K.'s MS., "Les Rois Mages Mystiques," and A. K., letter to President of T.S. (Madras), 31st October, 1883.

[23] E. M., letter to J. S. C., 28th April, 1890.

[24] Pref. R.E., p. *lviii. post.*

and desire to obey the injunction—so incessantly enforced in Scripture—'with all thy getting get Understanding'; for that which this work does, as never before has been done in respect of Christianity, is to relate the things of the Soul to the Mind in such way as to replace and establish religion on its proper 'rock,' the Understanding, instead of resting it on the authority of an Order, such as the Sacerdotal."[25] In her Presidential Address to the British Theosophical Society, before referred to, Anna Kingsford also said: "Ours may be indeed the religion of the poor, but it cannot be that of the ignorant. For we disclaim alike authority and dogma, we appeal to the *reason of humanity*, and to educated and cultivated thought. Our system of doctrine does not rest upon a remote past; it is built upon no series of historical events assailable by modern criticism; it deals not with extraneous personalities or with arbitrary statements of dates, facts, and evidence; but it relates, instead, to the living to-day, and to the ever-present testimony of nature, of science, of thought, and of intuition. That which is exoteric and extraneous is the evanescent type, the historical ideal, the symbol, the form, and these are all in all to the unlearned. But that which is esoteric and interior is the permanent verity, the essential meaning, the thing signified; and to apprehend this, the mind must be reasonable and philosophic, and its method must be scientific and eclectic."[26]

"I rarely," said Edward Maitland, "see any question

[25] E. M., letter to J. S. C., 28th April, 1890.
[26] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 126. See also App. No. III.

raised which, for those who are spiritually intelligent, has not been adequately treated in *The Perfect Way*."[27] It is "especially valuable for the genuine student of things spiritual, because, instead of representing foregone conclusions mechanically adopted or hastily formed, or conclusions rested on a narrow range of observation, or consisting of mere speculations and theories, or being a compilation of the opinions of others, it represents the actual experiences, perceptions, and recollections of its own writers, concerning orders of beings and spheres of activity at once including and transcending those familiar to Spiritualists, while its conclusions have the further advantage of coinciding with and receiving confirmation from those of the most advanced souls known to our planet, whether as formulated in the sacred mysteries of antiquity, or as since discerned by all who have, by 'living the life,' specially qualified themselves to be instruments of spiritual perception."[28]

In the Preface to the Second Edition, reference is made to certain "experiences" of which this book is the result. Since the publication of that Edition, Edward Maitland has related (shortly), in *The Story of the New Gospel of Interpretation*,[29] and (fully) in his great and final work, *The Life of Anna Kingsford*,[30] these experiences, and the following facts are derived mainly from these sources. In telling the tale

27 Letter in *Light*, 1890, p. 494.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 507.

29 Published in 1893. A third and enlarged Edition was published in 1905, under the title of *The Story of Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, and of the New Gospel of Interpretation.*

30 Published, in two large volumes of 880 pages, in 1896.

of *The Perfect Way*, I have endeavoured as far as possible—and even at the risk of some repetition—to tell it in the words of the participants, so as to give to this Preface the additional value that must attach to *ipsissima verba*.

The collaboration between the late Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, of which this book was the chief outcome,[31] may be said to have commenced in February, 1874, when Edward Maitland first visited Anna Kingsford at her husband's rectory at Pontesbury, Salop (Shropshire), for a fuller interchange of ideas than could otherwise have been had. This memorable visit, which lasted for nearly a fortnight, resulted, said Edward Maitland, "in an intimacy which made me to such extent a member of the family as to remove all obstacles to the collaboration required of us."[32] The purpose of this collaboration proved to be the restoration of the esoteric philosophy or Theosophy of the West, and the interpretation thereby of the Christian and kindred religions.[33] Both were conscious of a mission, and when the time came for the "unsealing of the World's Bibles," they recognised their "own appointed mission as that of unsealing the Bibles of the West":[34] a mission derived, not from any Church or a section of any Church visible, terrestrial, and corrupt, but "from the Church invisible, celestial, and incorruptible."[35] Prior to the publication of *The Perfect Way*, there was not any

[31] *Life of A. K.*, vol. i., p. 108.

[32] *Story of A. K. and E. M.*, pp. 1, 2, 37.

[33] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 15.

[34] *Story of A. K. and E. M.*, pp. 2, 15, 16, 37; *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 20.

[35] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 286.

satisfactory work in existence enunciatory of the true spiritual interpretation of the allegories of the Bible.[36]

It is a remarkable fact that, precisely at the moment when Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland were entering upon the collaboration which had for its aim the restoration, interpretation, and vindication of the great mystical system of the West which underlay all its ancient religions and sacred Scriptures, the founders of the Theosophical Society were preparing, on the other side of the Atlantic, to do precisely the same thing for the corresponding system of the East; and it is remarkable that the whole movement comprising these two events, had its rise precisely at the time for which it had been announced in numerous predictions from before the Christian Era to the latter Middle Age, and partook of precisely the characteristics then prescribed.[37]

[36] "The difference," said Edward Maitland, "between this book and others kindred to it, is that while they, one and all, whether anterior or posterior to it, content themselves with interpretations which are not purely spiritual and therefore not mystical, *The Perfect Way* insists on the purely spiritual as alone representing the intention of the allegories in question" (*Light*, 1888, p. 474); and, he said, "it is only the interpretation that I am giving that will save the Bible and at the same time abolish the supposed antagonism between religion and science" (Letter to R., 3rd May, 1891).

[37] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., pp. 15, 16. See Article of E. M. in *Light*, 1890, p. 522. While this was so, *The Perfect Way* is the outcome of a work that was commenced *prior* to the formation of the Theosophical Society, which was formed towards the close of 1875, and carried out in complete independence of that Society and its teaching. Any similarity between the teaching must be ascribed to the correspondence originally subsisting between the Christian and Buddhist religions.

On the arrival of *The Perfect Way* in India, in the Spring of 1882, the chief of the Theosophical Society invited Anna Kingsford and

Their method of procedure consisted in "the forcible projection of their mind's perceptive point inwards and upwards to its central and radiant point in search of the informing idea of any phenomenal fact, following meanwhile the mode of life which always has been found essential to such intro-vision, one indispensable condition being the renunciation of flesh as food."[38] The inward and upward direction of the mind, and the knowledges thereby received, constitute *the Intuition*, which faculty, Edward Maitland said, "consists in such *polarisation*—by means of intense concentration—of the consciousness to its innermost and highest point, as brings the man into open relations with his central, essential, permanent ego, the Soul, and makes him a participator in the knowledges concerning God and

Edward Maitland to join that Society in the capacity of President and Vice-President respectively of their British Branch, saying that "they recognised in that book knowledges of which the Eastern Adepts had believed themselves to be the exclusive possessors, having been safe-guarded by them from the remotest ages" (Letter of E. M. in *Light*, 1893, p. 104, and see App. No. III.): and in January 1883, Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, on the nomination of C. C. Massey, were elected President and Vice-President respectively of the British Theosophical Society; but, in 1884, owing to the opposition from certain Members of that Society (then known as the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society) to their introduction of *Christian* Theosophy, they withdrew from the Lodge, and sought an independent platform for their teaching in the Hermetic Society, which they then formed. This Society, owing to the ill-health of Anna Kingsford, after two years fell into abeyance. Happily, owing to the subsequent change of attitude on the part of the Theosophical Society, the causes which forced Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland to withdraw from the London Lodge have long ceased to exist.

[38] E. M., Letter in *Light*, 1893, p. 103; and see *C.W.S.*, Pref., p. xxii.

the universe which, in the long ages of its past as an individuated entity, the Soul has acquired by experience. This condition constitutes for the subject of it *Spiritual Illumination*, and its products are *Divine Knowledges*." [39]

In 1876, Edward Maitland was writing a book having for its text and title *The Finding of Christ, the Completion of the Intuition, and the Restoration of the Ideal.* "This Book," Edward Maitland said, "I was allowed neither to complete nor yet to abandon. Through some compulsion, the source and reason of which I was at the time unable to discern, the writing of it was suspended; but only—as the event proved—to be resumed, in another form, after the course of education, experience, and unfoldment necessary for its due accomplishment." [40]

Two years later, he had "written enough to make a moderate volume," defining the principles on which, as it appeared to him, the Bible, in order to be a book of the Soul, must be constructed, and on which, therefore, it must be interpreted.[41] But, though he had consciously been assisted in his work by light from interior sources, the book was still incomplete, and he had come to a standstill, being "unable to obtain a glimmer of a fresh idea." [42] He had no books to help him, nor the knowledge of any which could help him. He did not speak of the direction of his thought, or of his difficulties to Anna Kingsford (with whom he was then staying in Paris), partly because he wished to exhaust

[39] See further as to this, *C.W.S.*, Pref., pp. xxi. to xxvi.
[40] *Life of A. K.*, vol. i., pp. 100, 101.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 264.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 265. E. M., article in *Light*, 1888, p. 127.

his own resources first, partly because he did not wish to take her mind off her medical studies in which she was then engrossed,[43] and partly because he knew that, unaided by illumination, she could not help him; and, at that time, she had not received any special illumination for many months.[44]

In this state of affairs, Edward Maitland said: "It was near midnight on June 4th, 1878, when, having retired to my sleeping-room, I stood by the open window gazing on the brilliantly starred sky, and the impulse came upon me to address a mental request for aid to the unseen agents of our past illuminations, whom we were wont to call the Gods. It was without any definite idea of a practical result that I did this, and rather as an expression of impatience and despair than of hope. 'If I really am to carry on this work, I *must* have help. I have gone as far as I can go of myself, and must stop and give it up unless I receive correction, confirmation, or extension. For my own resources are exhausted.' Having thus silently formulated my needs to the rulers of the starlit expanse, I went to bed."[45] Two mornings after this, Anna Kingsford, not knowing anything of Edward Maitland's request, handed him a manuscript, containing about 860 words, written in pencil, saying it was something she had seen in her sleep during the night and written down immediately on waking, so far as she could recollect it; and she wanted to know if it was anything that

[43] Anna Kingsford was then on the eve of a very important examination.

[44] *Life of A. K.*, vol. i., p. 265.

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 265, 266.

he wanted—for she hardly knew what it was about, having written it so rapidly, and not having had time to read it over and think about it. "Eagerly perusing it," Edward Maitland said, "I found it to be a direct answer to my appeal, which for fullness and lucidity surpassed the most sanguine expectations I could have formed, and affording at once precisely the correction, the confirmation, and the amplification I had asked for."[46] They read and re-read it with amazement and delight, and found that it opened the Scriptures from one end to the other, relating Genesis to the Apocalypse, and giving a key to the interpretation of both, but, to their disappointment, the communication was incomplete, leaving off in the middle of a sentence. Anna Kingsford then told Edward Maitland that she had received this communication under the following circumstances: she had dreamt that she was in an old-fashioned library, in which sat an elderly couple, at whose invitation she mounted a ladder and took down a book the appearance of which had attracted her. "On opening it, she found that the leaves consisted of plates of silver, thick and massive, and every page reflected herself, and that which she wrote down on waking was what she had read in this book. At the point where the exposition broke off, the writing had disappeared from the book and its pages became mirrors in which she beheld only her own image."[47] They both longed

[46] *Life of A. K.*, vol. i., pp. 266, 267; *Story of A. K. and E. M.*, pp. 142–147.

[47] This was intended to denote the intuitional nature of the teaching. Anna Kingsford was subsequently (on 15th March, 1880) told that she

for the communication to be completed; and, in due course, it was; for, two mornings afterwards, Anna Kingsford gave to Edward Maitland a further manuscript of a like character, and in continuation of the former one, which, she said, she had received also in sleep—it having been "delivered as a lecture by a man in priestly garb to a numerous class of neophytes," of whom she was one, "as they sat in an amphitheatre of white stone." In her dream she had taken notes of this lecture. Her notes, of course, disappeared with her dream; but she was able, on waking, to reproduce the lecture from memory, when she wrote it down, her memory having been "abnormally enhanced"—for "the words presented themselves again to her as she wrote, and stood out luminously to view."[48] Speaking of these Illuminations, Edward Maitland said: "We felt that we had indeed been permitted to tap—so to speak—a reservoir of boundless wisdom and knowledge, and were filled with joy and thankfulness accordingly, for we saw that we had obtained access to a sphere where all memories of the world's past were indelibly preserved and stored up, so that no part of its history, however remote and lost so far

had been enabled, under Swedenborg's magnetism, to visit this Library, and had thus "recovered a memory of no small value." Though associated with Swedenborg, and working on the same lines, Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland were not indebted to him for their teaching, nor restricted by his limitations (*Life of A. K.*, vol. i., pp. 268, 359, 360; and see p. xxiii. *post*).

48 *Life of A. K.*, vol. i., p. 269; *Story of A. K. and E. M.*, pp. 147–150. For the full text of these two Illuminations "Concerning the Interpretation of the Mystical Scriptures," see *C. W. S.*, part i., No. v., pp. 16–22.

as men are concerned, is beyond recovery, and where also are the solutions of all problems."[49]

Soon after this, Anna Kingsford had "a terrible illness, lasting several weeks, which threatened to break her down altogether, and, for a long time, quite destroyed her psychic memory"; but, in the following September, her faculty began to recover its power, and, for the next year and a half, she continued to receive similar instructions, most of them being so timed as to come when, having exhausted his own power of interpretation, Edward Maitland stood in need of help, and this generally without Anna Kingsford knowing his need, and always without her being able to supply it had she known it—for, Edward Maitland said, "the knowledges were far beyond us both, as also was the language in which they were expressed."[50]

In March 1880, Anna Kingsford found herself again in the Library where she had received the Chapter concerning the interpretation of the Mystical Scriptures, and was told by the same old gentleman who had received her on the former occasion, and whom she again saw, that "he desired to communicate with Mr. Maitland on a matter too delicate to be entrusted to a third person," but that he had a difficulty in doing so, as he (Mr. Maitland) had not been able to find his way to his (the old gentleman's) house. Neither Anna Kingsford nor Edward Maitland, at that time, had any idea as to who the old gentleman was. Soon

[49] *Life of A. K.*, vol. i., p. 268; *Story of A. K. and E. M.*, pp. 149, 150.

[50] E. M., letter in *Light*, 1888, pp. 127, 128.

after this, Edward Maitland, while sitting at his work, "received a sudden vivid impression" to the effect that the book which he was writing, and which was then nearly complete, "had better be published anonymously, in order to prevent the consideration of it from being impaired by association with the name of any person." Under date of 13th March, 1880, Edward Maitland, writing of this in his Diary, said: "There was at the time a question about the book which much exercised me, and does so still. It is not that of putting my name to it. I have had no idea of withholding that. It is as to how far I am at liberty to use our chapters on the interpretation of Scripture. I can neither assume the authorship of them, nor can I avow their derivation; and I have been greatly perplexed accordingly. The impression above mentioned was accompanied by another which caused me to exclaim to myself that there was but one person from whom it could justly proceed, this being Emmanuel Swedenborg. For the impression was to the effect that he (Swedenborg) hoped by our means to correct and complete his work." Edward Maitland made no mention to Anna Kingsford of this occurrence, nor had either of them thought of connecting Swedenborg's name with the owner of the Library that Anna Kingsford had visited in sleep. "But" (Edward Maitland's Diary continues) "yesterday evening, having been prompted to sit for some writing, the instrument[51] wrote the words 'Mr. Maitland.' As this was the first time that I had ever been thus designated by it, or by any of our invisible visitants, and as it

[51] A planchette.

was also the name by which the occupant of the Library had spoken of me, I concluded that it was he who was writing, and, accordingly, inquired whether I was correct in my idea as to what it was that he wanted to say to me. In reply to this, he wrote, 'Not quite,' and presently added, 'It is not considered desirable in our circle that you should produce the book in your name. I will suggest to Mrs. Kingsford what should be done. Good night.—E. S.' These being the initials of Swedenborg, I referred to Carpenter's Life of him, of which I have lately obtained a copy, and found that the specimen there given of his hand-writing closely resembled that of our message; while Mary[52] declared that the portrait of him in the book, which she now saw for the first time, was exactly that of the tenant of the library, showing him as the same placid-looking, smooth-shaven, courtly man, she had described to me. In short, every particular corresponded, even to his formal and measured mode of address, making it impossible to doubt that it was indeed the famous Swedish seer himself who had quitted the earth-life close on a century ago, and that he was now interesting himself in the work of the New Gospel of Interpretation, of which he had been the forerunner"[53]

[52] "Mary" was the initiation name given to Anna Kingsford.

[53] The doctrine of the communications received by Anna Kingsford concerning the mystical interpretation of Scripture proved to be identical with that of Swedenborg, saving in some particulars which were of such a kind as to show that Swedenborg had advanced to more correct views since his death. The teaching was that of Swedenborg, but without his limitations (E. M., letter in *Light*, 1888, p. 128).

Edward Maitland's Diary continues:—"March 14th—This evening Swedenborg came to us again, and, in reference to the change of plans recommended to me, wrote:[54] 'You may probably have a good deal of recasting to do; but do not let that discourage you. You will be repaid. In fact, the book should not see the light until the campaign has been opened at Mrs. Kingsford's house by a few parlour addresses from her lips. But do not be too kind to the Christians.' On this we asked what precisely he meant by this caution, when he wrote: 'I use the word in its popular, not in its eclectic sense. You are emphatically Perfectionists. Since I have had my library, I have occupied myself much with pre-Nazarene eclecticism; and I find it much richer and more profound than that of the comparatively uncultivated Nazarite School.'"[55]

On the night of 22nd March, 1880, Anna Kingsford dreamt that she and Edward Maitland had a conversation with Swedenborg, who said: "The general plan of your book is good, but you are recommended to avoid identifying the writer with the author of any former work.[56] Use the first personal pronoun in writing if this facilitates the

[54] Through the planchette, as on the previous occasion. Some few days after the receipt of this message, Anna Kingsford dreamt that Swedenborg told her that he was, in future, forbidden to use the planchette, since, by its use, deception was courted through the facility with which the lower spirits could use it (*Life of A. K.*, vol. i., pp. 360, 361).

[55] *Life of A. K.*, vol. i., pp. 357, 358; *Story of A. K. and E. M.*, p. 99.

[56] Edward Maitland was then well known as the author of several books.

expression, and as in effect you have used it largely. Let that form stand, but avoid recognition as Edward Maitland. You are recommended to introduce a chapter on the prophetic faculty as the product of Memory, and to cite such passages as occur to you in support of this doctrine. Let this chapter or paragraph introduce the citations you give from the prophetic explanations of the esoteric books of the Bible, and quote them as fragmentary specimens of this recollection occurring to one now a woman, but formerly an Initiate, who is beginning to recover this power by slow degrees."[57]

On the night of the 13th January, 1881, Anna Kingsford, in her sleep, had a conversation with one whom she "recognised as William Lilly, the Astrologer," who had their "Bible of Interpretation," which he refused to communicate to others. On her asking him the reason for his refusal, fixing his eyes upon her intently, he replied, "I will communicate them" (these Scriptures) "when I can find Seven Men who for forty days have tasted no flesh, whose hands have shed no blood, and whose tongues have tasted of none."[58]

Shortly after this, Anna Kingsford, speaking under illumination, said: "It seems that we cannot do anything to facilitate the reception of the new Revelation, but my Genius wants me to lecture during the coming season. . . . We may tell all we know, but only to the persons of the

[57] *Life of A. K.*, vol. i., p. 361; *Story of A. K. and E. M.*, p. 98, and see n. (47), p. xvii. *ante*.

[58] *Life of A. K.*, vol. i., pp. 435, 441; *Story of A. K. and E. M.*, pp. 131, 132.

kind described in my interview with Lilly. If we attempt to speak to others, it will be made impossible for us; we shall be stopped.[59] This prohibition applies only to the Greater Mysteries. We may speak to others of things historical or interpretative, such as explain or reconcile the religions. He says, I must not lecture under my own name." Subsequently, she said: "My Genius tells me that my addresses are to begin at drawing-room meetings, where, as they will be private, there will be no need to conceal my name. It is otherwise in the case of public assemblies, lectures, and publications. The name must be suppressed for the sake of husband and relatives, and a synonym or an assumed name used. . . . My lectures are to begin with the beginning of our work and the earlier truths given to us. The Greater Mysteries are to be reserved until we have a circle of pure livers, in number, if even, of 40, 12, or 10; and, if uneven, of 9, 7, 5, or 3."[60]

Edward Maitland said: "The materials for our coming lectures were in our possession and in abundance, and there was no doubt that more would be forthcoming as we proceeded with the preparation of them; but the task was a vast one, and not only was the time at our disposal short, if we were to take advantage (as we proposed) of the London season—for it was no ordinary quality of

[59] Both Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland on several occasions had been stopped in a very unpleasant though effectual manner from disclosing certain teachings received by them to people to whom their Illuminators did not wish them to disclose them (*Life of A. K.*, vol. i., pp. 263, 306; *Story of A. K. and E. M.*, pp. 116, 117).

[60] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., pp. 4, 5.

workmanship that would serve as the fitting expression for the teaching committed to us—but our own physical condition was still such that, had we only ourselves to trust to, we should have despaired of success. The plan in view comprised the writing and delivery of nine compendious lectures in about as many weeks, and while Mary's health was as variable as ever, comprising rapid alternations from the summits of spiritual insight and power to the lowest depths of disability from pain and weakness, mine—though the 'broken link in the golden chain' had been repaired, as promised, as the Spring advanced and the sun waxed in strength—showed but little abatement of the physical distress, which seemed to have become chronic, and, if curable at all, to require a term of years rather than of weeks or months, and this combined with absolute cessation of mental work. So deep-seated were the effects of the nervous strain and depletion to which I had been subjected during the years passed in Paris.

"The manner of our collaboration in *The Perfect Way*—for such was the title determined on—was in this wise. Having arranged the order of the exposition and ascertained the number of its main sections, we selected each the subjects which we felt the best able to treat, but not with any intention of confining ourselves exclusively to the subjects thus chosen. It was necessary that our collaboration be particular as well as general, and extend to every sentence and detail, however minute, so that no single word go forth which did not represent the full light of our combined perception.

Accordingly, whatever was written by either of us was passed to the other to be dealt with freely, and then passed back again to be similarly dealt with anew—a process the result of which was sometimes the complete disappearance of the original draft. Not that there was anything tentative about the *doctrine* to be expounded. We were both masters of that. The question was of selection, arrangement, and expression, and the restriction of the exposition to the essential and fundamental, the primary and the interior, to the exclusion of the accidental and superficial, the secondary and the exterior. Thus seeking always inwards and upwards to the highest, resolved to be content with nothing short of the highest, it would sometimes happen that what had at first presented itself would vanish in favour of something far superior, of which the former had been the suggestion only, essentially identical, but connoting rather an exterior orbit of the systems of which the latter was the true centre. This was a process which frequently reminded me of the motto of my once favourite pastime, archery—for proficiency in which I had gained the champion's medal in 1878—the phrase '*Centrum Pete*,' and led me to see in that art a training for the lofty work in store for me, while Mary would remark that it was like mounting to a height by climbing alternately on one another's shoulders. And sometimes what we had thus conjointly written would serve as a platform from which she would spring, as it were, into the infinite, so exalted would be the truth suggested, which from such level she was able to discern.

" All that portion of the work which consisted in selecting

and arranging the teachings received fell to me, Mary desiring rather to reserve herself for the fresh illuminations which might be in store as we proceeded.[61] And, moreover, I was the more familiar of the two with what had been received, having, as their copyist, committed them largely to memory, while for her they had become somewhat dimmed. Among the sources of my satisfaction, while thus engaged, was the discovery that much of what I had written while in Paris was suitable for use without modification either in substance or in form, many passages fitting in with an exactitude which made them appear as if the context had been contrived expressly to match them."[62]

When the time came for the delivery of the lectures, there was no lack of persons who were willing and eager to attend them; but, owing chiefly to the conditions, to which reference has been made, imposed on them, Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland were much exercised about the composition of their audience. Finally, an audience of more than average intelligence and culture of the kind required for the appreciation of the message to be delivered was selected. Among those present, there were several whose names are well known as those of persons who have been leaders in the spiritual movement of the age.[63]

The lectures, which were largely written from week to

[61] Anna Kingsford received instructions and illuminations while she was preparing, and in connection with the subject matter of her lectures (*Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., pp. 12, 14; and see Lects. III., 52 n., and IV., 14).

[62] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., pp. 10–12.

[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 16.

week while in actual course of delivery, were delivered, in the months of May, June, and July, by Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland in a "little drawing-room" at No. 11 Chapel Street, Park Lane, London,[64] and each lecture was followed by a discussion.

The lectures having been duly delivered, the remainder of the year was spent in preparing them for publication. The revision, first of the text and next of the proofs, was "a task of infinite toil" to them both; but they were "all the time conscious of close supervision."[65] They were anxious to complete the book in time for it to be published during the year 1881, but, owing partly to the "constant reception of fresh points of light, which required to be added in,"[66] they were unable to do it. The other hindering cause was of a very different nature. Edward Maitland said: "We were determined that the printer's part of the work should be as perfect as our own, and it was as if there was a no less resolute endeavour on the other side to baffle us, so persistent were the compositors in making fresh mistakes when in the act of correcting previous ones. Never, probably, was there a book which required so many revises. It seemed to us that a 'printer's devil' of exceptional malignance had been charged to baffle and spoil our work."[67]

64 *Life of A. K.*, vol. i., p. 388; vol. ii., p. 15. The name of this street was, in 1886, changed to, and now is, Aldford Street. The dates on which the lectures were delivered are given in the footnotes to the lectures.

65 All the italicised parts of the book—except where the context shows otherwise—were verbal revelations to Anna Kingsford (*Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 33).

66 *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., pp. 27, 28.

67 *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 27.

The cover of the book was designed by Anna Kingsford. It had "in the centre a figure of the 'woman clothed with the sun,' to denote the soul and her full illumination by the spirit; at the corners the symbols of the four evangelists and elemental divinities, which signify the four divisions of existence, both within man and without him; and round the borders the texts, 'The Path of the Just is as the shining Light, that shineth more and more unto the Perfect Day!' and 'Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee!' Mary was very proud of this design. . . ,. The design on the back cover was the symbol of the double triangle, interlaced, which denotes the interlinking of the worlds unmanifest and manifest; and a monogram composed of the letters A, E, and M, being the initials of our Christian names and that of Lady Caithness, which was added to our own in token of her part in the enterprise."[68]

On the 4th November, 1881, Anna Kingsford, writing to Lady Caithness, said: "I doubt not that Mr. M. keeps you 'posted up' in the progress of *the Book*, which we are doing our utmost to get out as a Christmas present to the

[68] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., pp. 33, 34. Art. in *Light*, 1895, p. 32. Lady Caithness had undertaken to bear the expense of the publication of *The Perfect Way*, which was "a costly book to publish," under the conviction that she had been "divinely charged with the duty" (*Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 27). It will be noticed that the letters A, E, and M, spell the French word AME (Soul). In 1889, Lady Caithness published in her magazine *L'Aurore* a French translation of *The Perfect Way*, and this was, in 1891, issued in book form, in response to urgent requests from Catholic Priests in France, who recognised in it the interpretation they had long sought of their own religious mysteries.

world. You can have no idea what a labour it has been, and, I may say, still is: for not only has it been exceedingly difficult to compress into moderate dimensions, and to express clearly in popular language, the enormous mass of truth we have to put forth, but we have also found it necessary to elucidate the text by means of woodcuts, the designing, copying, and perfecting of which, having been exclusively assigned to me, have occupied a considerable amount of time. The Triangle, which occupies so large a part in your own symbolic system of thought, is now newly exemplified in the threefold united effort by means of which our book is to be introduced to the world. And it seems to be somewhat significant that the trio thus chosen represents, respectively, three distinct powers, with none of which we could have dispensed. . . . I regard the prophecy concerning this year as already fulfilled in the production of our book, which will, for the first time in the world's history, 'make straight the way of the Lord,'—the Perfect Way."[69]

The work accomplished in the production of *The Perfect Way*, was, Edward Maitland said, "accomplished only at that maximum cost, physical, mental, and other, which seemed to be the appointed condition of all our work; and, indeed, it sometimes seemed as if the two things were in inverse ratio to each other, and that the greater the cost and suffering, the greater the results to the work, and the more the sowing had been in tears, the more the reaping was in joy:"[70] but, he said, "Since we had neither sought nor obtained the revelation in it for our own exclusive benefit—

[69] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., pp. 41, 42. [70] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

but for the world's salvation from the abyss of Materialism and Negation in which it was being rapidly engulfed—we were prepared and ready to undertake it at any sacrifice to ourselves."[71]

The Perfect Way was actually published in February, 1882; and, in accordance with the directions given to the Writers, it was published anonymously; and it was "bound in the nearest colour to purple that was to be had, namely, a peacock blue," in order—while including the Seven Spirits of God—to combine Anna Kingsford's and Edward Maitland's own colours, the red and the blue.[72]

The book received a reception that its Writers, while not taken by surprise, could hardly have looked for, as the following extracts from two letters, written by Anna Kingsford to Lady Caithness, soon after its publication, show. "Strange indeed it would be," she said, "if our book should find universal acceptation in a world which rejected Christ! But those who *do* recognise our teachings do so not warmly only, but enthusiastically;"[73] and, in a further letter written to the same lady, after referring to a

[71] E. M., letter in *Light*, 1895, p. 38. In the same letter, Edward Maitland said that the cost of keeping *The Perfect Way* and its companion books before the world had so greatly exceeded the return accruing from sales, as to have constituted a drain on his resources such as prevented him publishing much else that would have been of high value to the world.

[72] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 33. The Seven Spirits of God are represented in the seven colours of the prism, the first and last of which are red and violet respectively; and the co-operation of all these Divine Potencies was indispensable to their work (*Story of A. K. and E. M.*, pp. 109, 110).

[73] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 56. See also App. No. III.

certain review which had then recently appeared, and which amounted to a misrepresentation "so gross and palpable" that she found it hard to believe that it had been committed innocently, she said: "After all this reviewing and fault-finding on the part of critics having but a third of the knowledge which has been given to us, there is not a line in *The Perfect Way*, which I would alter were the book to be reprinted. . . . I have no fear that the Immortals will deceive me, nor am I in the least disconcerted by adverse criticism. That others do not see, and cannot understand, proves only how greatly our work is needed in the world, and how far it surpasses all minor labours and teaching. Let no one, dear friend, shake your constant mind from the great doctrines which we have of the Holy Powers themselves. For all other teaching, save that which is based on *Justice*, shall come to nothing. 'The just Lord loveth justice; His countenance beholdeth the thing that is just.' Try all the doctrine of *The Perfect Way* by this supreme test, and see if it does not in all things satisfy and fulfil it as does no other under the sun. All are broken lights,—lights indeed, but fragmentary merely; one teaching including some stray beams, and others more. But *to us the Gods have given without measure, a perfect and glorious orb of complete glory, and if we be but faithful, there is nothing we may not know.*"[74]

Edward Maitland, writing at a subsequent period, summed up the position as follows. He said: "Had we been sanguine about the reception of this book by the

[74] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 75.

general press, secular or religious, the event would have been a grievous disappointment, but we were spared this by our knowledge of the world's spiritual state. With a press one half of which was inveterately Sadducee, and the other half inveterately Sacerdotal and wedded to traditions which make the Word of God as revealed by the pure intuition of none effect, and with the spiritual consciousness flesh-eaten out of existence, the audience to which we appealed had yet to be created. In most of the few cases where our book was valued at all, we were taunted with superstition for believing in a spiritual world! As if the real superstition was not the worship of matter, and the crediting of it with being the substance of the universe."[75]

On the other hand, *The Perfect Way* was quickly recognised by many of the profoundest students and most advanced souls of the time, irrespective of creed, nationality, or race, as being a full and faithful exposition of the nature of existence such as had never before been given to the world, and "as representing the recovery, under celestial guidance, of the original revelation which constituted the *Gnosis*, or Knowledge, which belonged to the sacred mysteries of antiquity, and of which their various Scriptures and religions were expressions, and with the taking away and withholding of the key to which Jesus so bitterly reproached, in the ecclesiasticism of His time, that of all time."[76] To name a few only of those who received the

[75] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 49; and see *Story of A. K. and E. M.*, pp. 187, 188.

[76] E. M., letters in *Light*, 1893, p. 103, and 1894, p. 477; and Obituary Notice of A. K. in *Light*, 1888, p. 116.

Revelation with gladness. Dr. Ernst Gryzanowsky—who has been described as "a man of the rarest order of intelligence and width of culture"—after reading *The Perfect Way*, wrote to Edward Maitland: "I fully acknowledge the fundamental truths of your philosophy, which is, without a doubt, the noblest and purest form of spiritualism I have yet met with. It is, at the same time, the most comprehensive form of spiritualism, containing or implying all that is worth having in the so-called mystic lore of ancient and modern times."[77] Lady Caithness, whose name has already been mentioned, after reading the book, wrote of it: "I have got another Bible," and she declared it to be "the *most complete* Revelation, *certainly*, that has yet been given to man on this Planet,"[78] and she described it as "that most admirable book which embodies the latest, highest, and most important revelations given to humanity, constituting a new Gospel which thousands would thankfully receive could the work in question be brought to their notice; for thousands are at this time literally starving for want of spiritual food adequate to the needs of their present spiritual growth;" and she said, "I have no hesitation whatever in pronouncing it to be the new Gospel of Interpretation of the Mysteries of God kept secret from the beginning."[79] "It is a noble book, breathing inspiration in every word."[80] The late Reverend G. J. R. Ousely, M.A., who, at one time, was a priest in the Catholic Apostolic

[77] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 114.
[78] *Ibid.*, pp. 52 and 53.
[79] Letter in *Light*, 1882, p. 378.
[80] *Ibid.*, 1895, p. 32.

Church, but who afterwards joined the Roman Catholic Church, and who was well known as a Christian Mystic and as having considerable knowledge of occult things, said of *The Perfect Way* that it was "the brightest and best of all revelations that had ever been given to the world," and that "the Church of the future would be the Church of *The Perfect Way*;"[81] and, when writing of the book shortly after its publication, he described it as "that most wonderful of all books which have appeared since the beginning of the 'Christian Era,'—a book that no student can be without if he will know *the truth* on these matters. It furnishes us with a master key to the phenomena which so perplex the minds of inquirers, and it gives a system of which the like has not been for eighteen centuries. Swedenborg was great indeed, but here we find a greater, without the prolixity and voluminousness of the Swedish seer and with a clearness which is wanting in his writings."[82]

In May, 1886, Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland were "very busy getting ready the revised edition of *The Perfect Way*," which was to contain "a new lecture and many alterations and improvements";[83] and, in the following October, it was in the press; but, owing to fresh matter which had to be included in it having been imparted to Anna Kingsford at the last moment, the publication was delayed until the following January.[84] As it was impossible

[81] See article in *Light*, 1907, p. 4.
[82] Letter in *Light*, 1882, p. 475.
[83] A. K., letter to Lady Caithness; *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 234.
[84] *Light*, 1886, p. 310.

for Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland to keep their names as the writers of the book secret, the Second (revised) Edition was not, like the First Edition, published anonymously. The new lecture referred to was Lecture V., on "The Nature and Constitution of the Ego," which was written by Edward Maitland—almost entirely from revelations received by Anna Kingsford—in substitution for the corresponding lecture on "The Constitution of Existence: Its Nature and Unity," in the First Edition.[85]

Anna Kingsford did not live to see the publication of the Third Edition of *The Perfect Way*; but, a few weeks before her death, which took place in her forty-second year, on the 22nd February, 1888, she read the book for the last time—for she "gloried in it" to the end, and considered it "the supreme privilege of her life to have been a sharer in its production;"[86] and, on her death-bed, "she received from time to time Illuminations which she described rapturously as being most glorious," "confirming and amplifying" all that she and Edward Maitland had been taught, and "disclosing vista after vista of the divinest truth and beauty beyond." To her great regret, she was too weak then to dictate the particulars or to write them down; but she was able, partly by the light of these Illuminations, to give to Edward Maitland some suggestions for adoption in the

[85] This lecture is reprinted in and forms Appendix No. I. of the present Edition.

[86] Shortly before her death, she drew up what might be termed a confession of faith, in which she said: "In the faith and doctrine set forth in that book" (*The Perfect Way*) "I desire to die" (*Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 305).

next Edition when the time should come for issuing a new Edition.[87] The most important of these was with reference to paragraphs 27–41 inclusive (which had been written jointly by her and Edward Maitland) of Lecture VIII., which she considered were "capable of improvement chiefly by means of amplification and extension;" and, being desirous only of leaving the book in the highest state of perfection, she advised that "in order to obtain the space requisite for the new matter—the book being stereotyped—several pages—about eighteen—be omitted. Not that she regarded their contents in any way as erroneous, but she considered the proposed new matter as of superior value."[88] Edward Maitland undertook, and regarded it as "a sacred duty," to carry out Anna Kingsford's last wishes;[89] and, after her death, he revised *The Perfect Way* accordingly and finally settled the text of the book; and the Third Edition, so revised and settled, was published in 1890. In a short advertisement to that Edition, Edward Maitland expressly stated that the alterations made therein involved "no change or withdrawal of doctrine, but only extension of scope, amplification of statement, or modification of expression," and that "the principal changes," which consisted in "the substitution of new matter for the greater

[87] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., pp. 337, 338, 365, 367; E. M., letter in *Light*, 1891, p. 416.

[88] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., pp. 33, 367, 371, 382. These paragraphs, 27–41 of Lecture VIII. of the Second Edition, are reprinted in and form Appendix No. II. of the present Edition. The "plates" also are reprinted in the present Edition.

[89] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 375.

part of paragraphs 27–41 in Lecture VIII., and the omission of the plates," were "made in accordance with Mrs Kingsford's last wishes and suggestions."

I have regarded the text of *The Perfect Way*, as finally settled by Edward Maitland, as sacred; and the nine lectures which comprise the present Edition are a reprint of the nine lectures which comprised the Third Edition. Nothing has been added to, and nothing has been abstracted from these lectures, or any of them. In the Appendices to the present Edition, I have, as already mentioned, included Lecture No. V. of the First Edition (which was, in the following Editions, superseded by the present Lecture No. V.), and paragraphs 27–41 of Lecture No. VIII. of the Second Edition (which were, in the Third Edition, superseded by the corresponding paragraphs of the present Lecture No. VIII.), and I have included some letters written by Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland to *Light* on "The Perfect Way and its Critics," which are of great interest and considerable value. The addition of this new matter has made it impossible to retain in the present Edition the Appendices—which consisted of some of Anna Kingsford's Illuminations or portions thereof — to the former Editions; but, as these Illuminations are all included in *Clothed With the Sun*, which was published in 1889,[90] their omission is of no consequence. I have also included in the present Edition the ten illustrations ("plates") that were in the First Edition, some only of which were in the

[90] *Clothed With the Sun: being the Book of the Illuminations of Anna (Bonus) Kingsford*, Second Edition, 1906.

Second Edition. There were not any illustrations in the Third Edition. The present Edition, with the above mentioned additions, is thus the first complete edition of *The Perfect Way*, comprising, as it does, all the lectures that have been published in the former Editions.

Anna Kingsford's share in writing *The Perfect Way*, alone, and apart from her other writings, has gained for her the reputation of being "a seer and prophet of unsurpassed lucidity and inspiration,"[91] for the doctrine of *The Perfect Way* was not received from any "extraneous or obsessing spirit or control;" nor, indeed, from any outside source whatever, but from "*the divine and interior spirit*;" and it was discovered only subsequently that the revelation thus made was not new, but, as has been said, was contained and formulated in the Hebrew Kabbala, in Hindû philosophy, and not less clearly in the mysteries of Egypt and Greece:[92] and these illuminations and inspirations were received by Anna Kingsford chiefly during natural sleep.[93] *The Perfect Way* constitutes nothing less than a re-delivery from or through the Soul—the source whence it originally came—of that Divine Gnosis, to which reference has been made, which underlay and controlled all the world's great Religions and Bibles, and by the aid of which alone these can be interpreted. And this was given to Anna Kingsford "not in suggestions and ideas only, but in language clear, precise, and exquisite, wholly beyond her own power of composi-

[91] *Light*, 1888, p. 116.

[92] See App. No. III.

[93] *C. W. S.*, Pref., pp. xxi. xxii.; *Story of A. K. and E. M.*, p. 163.

tion, and accompanied by dramatic experiences of the most striking kind."[94] For just as the original and ancient Revelation was derived from or through the divine part of man's nature, so the recovery of it was thence derived, that part of his nature being always accessible to those who lead the requisite life, and direct the force of their minds inwards and upwards in search of it. The method of Divine Revelation is always the same, namely, the intuition operating under spiritual illumination.[95] And not only was this revelation not due to "guides" in the ordinary sense, it was not—as some have supposed—made solely to or through Anna Kingsford. "It was made," said Edward Maitland, "to us both, and this, not by extraneous spirits, but by our own souls directly and through our own consciousnesses."[96] *The Perfect Way*, therefore, represents "the attainment of communion with the innermost and highest in man himself, his own Central and Divine Spirit, the God within, than whom there is no higher source accessible of light and life, seeing that the God within is one with the God without, and that only through the God within can the God without be approached." [97]

Respecting the nature and range of the marvellous faculty by the possession of which Anna Kingsford was so far removed from the category of ordinary "mediums" and inquirers into esoteric science, the following passage

[94] E. M., Obituary Notice of A. K., *Light*, 1888, p. 116; *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., pp. 347, 348.

[95] See also *C. W. S.*, Pref., pp. xxiii., xxiv.

[96] E. M., letter to Madame de M., 10th July, 1891.

[97] E. M.'s MS. on "*The Perfect Way*"; and see App. No. III.

(written by Edward Maitland) from a letter, dated 18th March, 1884, addressed by her and Edward Maitland to the Fellows of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, is of considerable interest and importance. Edward Maitland says: "This, she wishes it to be clearly understood, is not an *occult* faculty in the common acceptation of the term. It involves no abnormal powers voluntarily directed, or acquaintance with any method requiring to be imparted by initiation of the secondary intellectual principles. Nor, again, does the condition in which it is exercised resemble the trance of ordinary clairvoyance. She is, therefore, neither a 'trained occultist' nor a natural clairvoyante. The faculty she possesses is one with which she was born, and it has been developed by a fourteen years' abstinence from flesh-food, and by a series of experiences and a manner of life not altogether at first the result of choice. Students of the Platonic Philosophy will recognise the condition in question as one of *illumination* affecting the soul rather than the mind. It is believed by her to be the result of psychic reminiscence, through which the *gnosis* acquired by initiation in a previous birth is revived and unfolded to her perception. She has strong reason for the conviction that the school, in virtue of her initiation into which these illuminations occur, was the Greco-Egyptian. The state during which they present themselves is one of intense and breathless concentration. The whole outer personality appears to be superseded and transcended, and knowledges are vividly borne in on the interior understanding as a vision, often of symbolic character. It has been shown by

means of these very illuminations that this condition, described as the result of psychic reminiscence, is, in her, exceptionally developed in consequence of the period now reached by her interior selfhood in its planetary evolution. Hers is represented to be an advanced Ego, which, having returned to definite existence more rapidly and persistently than is the normal case, has thus got ahead of the case generally, and thereby developed a faculty which will in time be attainable by all souls *who have been really initiated in a former birth.* But this reminiscence is possible only in respect of the *religious gnosis*, dealing with principles and metaphysical truth, not in respect of that which, being intellectual and dealing with the condition and exercise of occult power, affects the *physiological memory*, and cannot be transferred from one birth to another *in the manner described.*" [98]

Edward Maitland died on the 2nd October, 1897, at the close of his seventy-third year, a little more than nine years after the death of his colleague.

Such is, shortly, the history of *The Perfect Way* which has restored to the world the long lost system, which is none other than the Esoteric Christianity of the Catholic Church, and which alone has ever been able to grapple with and overcome the "dragon" of Materialism, and has thus afforded a full demonstration of the truth of that system, inasmuch as the knowledges contained in it were recovered, as they alone could be recovered, by means of the Intuition, and in the pages of which, Edward Maitland said, "the very life-

[98] See also *C. W.S.*, Pref., p. xxv., note (3).

blood of our souls" was "shed for the world's redemption."[99] Without doubt, *The Perfect Way*, as Edward Maitland has said, "is destined largely to control the faith, worship, and practice of the future."[100] In a letter dated 5th April, 1882, to Lady Caithness, Anna Kingsford said:—

"Of one thing I am sure; which is, that the Doctrine of which our book is the first Apostle will sooner or later become the headstone of the corner; for it is the only doctrine capable of explaining the otherwise insoluble enigmas of the universe, and embodying a philosophy in which are united all the elements of every divine revelation vouchsafed to mankind. By it Christian and Buddhist, Parsee and Hebrew, Greek and Egyptian, are brought into harmony, and shown to be only so many different dialects of one Catholic language. *The Perfect Way* is thus an eirenicon, and 'the Peace-maker is the Child of God.'"[101]

As the faculty employed by Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland in the production of *The Perfect Way* was the Intuition operating under Spiritual Illumination, the doctrine of *The Perfect Way* cannot be regarded as mere speculation, for "the intuition is not a creative, but a perceptive and recollective faculty;[102] and, therefore, its results are not surmises or opinions, but *knowledges*, inasmuch as they are formulated in actual experience acquired" (by the Soul) "either in the present or in past lives."[103] Edward Maitland

[99] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 356.
[100] *Ibid.*, p. 367.
[101] *Ibid.*, p. 56. See also App. No. III.
[102] See Lect. I., 12.
[103] Letter dated 10th July, 1882, from "The Writers of *The Perfect Way*" to *The Theosophist*. See also letter of E. M. in the *Agnostic Journal*, 25th August, 1894

said, the doctrine "is no mere matter of opinion, but truth as clear, as certain, as impossible to be otherwise, as the demonstration of any mathematical proposition: so that any divergency from it must represent false teaching:"[104] for the truths disclosed to Anna Kingsford are "every whit as necessary and self-evident to the spiritual apprehension as those of Geometry to the intellectual."[105] But while Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland found that the system given to them was "an infallible touchstone" whereby to test all others,[106] they did not accept it on the strength of their having been told it, for, as Edward Maitland said, "one does not know a thing for being told it;" nor did they accept it on the strength of the manner of its communication. They accepted it on the strength of their recognising and discerning it as necessary truth, founded in the nature of existence, and incapable of being otherwise, just as two and two are incapable of being anything but four.[107] And for this reason they did not rest their teaching on authority—whether of Book, Person, Order, Institution, Tradition, or Convention — but relied solely upon the strength of experience, and (as stated in the Preface to the First Edition) appealed to the understanding as the basis of belief.[108] *The Perfect Way* is really a record of experiences,

[104] E. M., letter to Lady C., 9th July, 1891.

[105] E. M., letter, dated 21st March, 1888, to *The Tablet*.

[106] *Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 200.

[107] E. M., letter to Mad. de M., 10th July, 1891; and see *C. W.S.*, Pref., p. xxii.

[108] E. M., letter in *Light*, 1892, p. 620; and see Lect. I., 23-25, 51, 52; and *C. W.S.*, Pref., pp. xxii., xxiii.

although, as a rule, the results only are given: hence the positiveness of the writers.

In conclusion, I ask the readers of this book to consider the following passage, taken from the Christian Scriptures,[109] in conjunction with the interpretation put upon it by Anna Kingsford:—

"And it came to pass that when the multitudes pressed upon Him to hear the Word of God, He stood by the Lake of Genesareth, and He saw two ships standing by the Lake; but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And going into one of the ships that was Simon's, He desired him to draw back a little from the land. And sitting, He taught the multitudes out of the ship. Now when He had ceased to speak, He said to Simon: Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering, said to Him: Master, we have laboured all the night, and have taken nothing; but at Thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net broke. And they beckoned to their partners who were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking. Which, when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was wholly astonished, and all who were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. And so were also James and John the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's

[109] Luke v. 1–10.

partners. And Jesus saith to Simon: Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

Anna Kingsford, writing as "a Toiler in the Ship of Peter," says:—

"In this Parable the Christ standing up by the water-side is the Logos, the Word of God, and the Lake by which he stands is the Psychic Element, the Soul of the Macrocosm and Microcosm (Genesareth, the Garden of God). Beside these spiritual waters there are two ships, but they are empty; their owners have gone out of them and are washing their nets. These empty ships are the two ancient parent Churches of East and West, the Oriental and the Pagan. At the time of the re-birth of the Mysteries under the Christian dispensation, both these Churches were barren and vacated; the life and vital power which once thundered from their Sinais and Olympuses were dead and gone out of them; the glory of their ancient oracles and hierarchies was no more; the nets with which they once had caught the *Gnosis* and spiritual graces needed cleansing and renovation; the vivifying Spirits or Angels which had animated these two Churches had forsaken their shrines.

"And the Christ, the Word, entered into one of them, which was Peter's, and desired him to thrust out *a little* from the land. The ship into which the Christian Logos thus entered at its outset was undoubtedly the Pagan Church which had its headquarters at Rome. It can be proved from monumental evidence and from the writings of the Fathers (see, *inter alia*, *Monumental Christianity* by Presbyter Lundy), that the new faith, whose epiphany must

have been at Alexandria, adopted from its earliest age the symbols, the rites, and the ceremonials of the expiring Pagan system, incorporating them into its own Mysteries, endowing them with new vitality, and thus perpetuating and preserving them almost intact to our own times.

"Peter is the universally accepted representative of the Genius of Rome. Peter's ship is the Roman Church of this day, even as the ship of Janus was in pre-Christian times the appropriate symbol of Pagan Rome. Peter is the opener and shutter of the Gates of the Church, even as Janus was of the portals of heaven.[110] It is, therefore, into this Pagan Church of Rome that the Logos enters, and prays its Genius to thrust out a little from the land. Now, in sacred allegory, the 'land' or earth is always a figure for the bodily element, as opposed to water, or the soul. It represents Matter, and the material plane and affinities.

"We see, then, that the Word, or "Christ," demanded in this first age of the Christian dispensation the partial spiritualisation of the existing Church,—demanded the basis of doctrine and dogma to be shifted from the mere dry earthy bottom of materialism and hero-worship on which it had become stranded, to the more appropriate element of ethical religion, the province of the soul,—not yet, however, far removed from the shallows of literalism and dogma. This done, the Word abides in the renovated Church and, for a time, teaches the people from its midst.

"Then comes the age which is now upon us, the age in which the Logos ceases to speak in the Christian Church;

[110] See Lect. I., 21.

and the injunction is given to the Angel of the Church: Launch out into the deep and let down your net for a draught. Quit the very shores and coasts of materialism; give up the accessories of human tradition which, in this era of science, are both apt to offend and so to narrow your horizon as to prevent you from reaping your due harvest of truth; abandon all appeals to mere historical exegesis, and launch out into the deeps of a purely spiritual and metaphysical element. Recognise this, and this alone henceforward, as the true and proper sphere of the Church.

"And the Apostle of the Church answers, Master, all through the dark ages, the mediæval times in which superstition and sacerdotalism reigned supreme and unquestioned —the night of Christendom,—we toiled in vain; the Church acquired no real light, she gained no solid truth or living knowledges. But now, at last, at Thy word, she shall launch out into the deep of thought, and let down her net for a draught.

"And a mighty success is prophesied to follow this change in the method and system of religious doctrine. The net of the Church encloses a vast multitude of mystic truths and knowledges,—more even than a single Church is able to deal with. Their number and importance are such that the Apostles or Hierarchs of the Christian Church find themselves well-nigh overwhelmed by the wealth of the treasury they have laid open. They call in the aid of the ancient Oriental Church, with its Angels, to bear an equal hand in the labours of spiritualisation, the diffusion of truth, the propaganda of the divine *Gnosis*, and the triumph

of esoteric Religion. Henceforth the toilers in the two Churches of East and West are partners; the Vedas and the Tripitakas find their interpretation in the same language and by the same method as the Christian evangel; Chrishna, Buddha, and Christ are united, and a true Brotherhood—a true *Eirenicon*—is preached to men.

"From that day forth, the Church Catholic and Christian need have no fear, for she shall indeed 'catch men.'"[111]

SAMUEL HOPGOOD HART.

CROYDON, *October*, 1908.

[111] A. K., letter to the President of the T.S., 31st October, 1883.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND (REVISED) EDITION.

As the writers—rather than the authors—of this book, we propose—on behalf of a more ready apprehension of it, and the satisfaction of much questioning concerning it—to take occasion on the issue of this Edition to give a succinct account of its nature and import.

That which *The Perfect Way* represents is neither an invention nor a compilation, but first, a discovery, and next, a recovery. It represents a discovery because it is the result of an attempt—proved successful by the issue—to ascertain at first hand the nature and method of existence. And it represents a recovery because the system propounded in it has proved to be that which constituted the basic and secret doctrine of all the great religions of antiquity, including Christianity,—the doctrine commonly called the *Gnosis*, and variously entitled Hermetic and Kabbalistic.

In yet another sense does *The Perfect Way* represent a recovery, and also—for ourselves—a discovery, seeing that it was independent of any prior knowledge on our part. This is as regards Faculty. For the knowledges concerned

although verified by subsequent research in the ordinary manner, were obtained solely by means of the faculty which consists in perception and recollection of the kind called intuitional and psychic, and therefore by the method which in all ages has been recognised as the means of access to knowledges transcendental and divine. Being fully described in the book (*e.g.*, Lect. I., pars. 4–18; *C.W.S.*, part i., No. ii. (1), pp. 5–8, etc.), this faculty needs no further definition here. It is necessary, however, to state this in relation to it: That the value of the recovery of the knowledges concerned, great as it is for the intrinsic interest and importance of the subject, is indefinitely enhanced by the manner of its accomplishment. For, much as it is to know the conclusions of ancient wisdom concerning the most momentous of topics, and to recognise their logical excellence, it is far more to know their truth, seeing that they involve the nature and destiny of man in all time. It is this supreme question which finds satisfactory solution in the present case. Had the recovery been made in the ordinary manner, namely, through the examination of neglected writings, or the discovery of lost ones,—methods which, however successful, would have been altogether inadequate for the results actually attained,—no step would have been gained towards the verification of the doctrines involved. Whereas as it is, for ourselves, and for all those who with us are cognisant of the genesis of this book, and who are at the same time sufficiently matured in respect of the spiritual consciousness to be able to accept the facts,—that is, for all who *know* enough to be able to *believe*,—the book constitutes of itself

an absolute confirmation of its own teaching, and, therein, of the recovered Gnosis. For, being due to intuitional recollection and perception,—faculties exercised in complete independence of the physical organism,—it demonstrates the essentially spiritual nature of existence; the reality of the soul as the true ego; the multiple rebirths of this ego into material conditions; its persistence through all changes of form and state; and its ability, while yet in the body, to recover and communicate of the knowledges which, in the long ages of its past as an individualised entity, it has acquired concerning God, the universe, and itself. In respect of all these, the experiences of which this book is the result—although themselves rarely referred to in it—have been such, both in kind and quantity, that to regard them and the world to which they relate as delusory, would be to leave ourselves without ground for belief in the genuineness of any experiences, or of any world whatsoever. It is not, however, upon testimony merely personal or extrinsic that the appeal on behalf of this book is rested, but upon that which is intrinsic, and capable of appreciation by all who have intelligent cognition of the subjects concerned.

Especially is this book designed to meet the peculiar circumstances of the times,—so aptly described by Mr. Matthew Arnold when he says that "at the present moment there are two things about the Christian religion which must be obvious to every percipient person; one, that men cannot do without it; the other, that they cannot do with

it as it is." In an age distinguished, as is the present, by all-embracing research, exhaustive analysis, and unsparing criticism, no religious system can endure unless it appeals to the intellectual as well as to the devotional side of man's nature. At present the faith of Christendom is languishing on account of a radical defect in the method of its presentation, through which it is brought into perpetual conflict with science; and the harassing and undignified task is imposed on its supporters of an incessant endeavour to keep pace with the advances of scientific discovery or the fluctuations of scientific speculation. The method whereby it is herein endeavoured to obviate the suspense and insecurity thus engendered, consists in the establishment of these three positions:—

(1) That the dogmas and symbols of Christianity are substantially identical with those of other and earlier religious systems.

(2) That the true plane of religious belief lies, not where hitherto the Church has placed it,—in the sepulchre of historical tradition, but in man's own mind and heart; it is not, that is to say, the objective and physical, but the subjective and spiritual; and its appeal is not to the senses but to the soul. And,

(3) That thus regarded and duly interpreted, Christian doctrine represents with scientific exactitude the facts of man's spiritual history.

It is true that many men renowned for piety and learning—pillars, accounted, of the faith—have denounced as in the highest degree impious the practice of what they call

"wresting Scripture from its obvious meaning." But their denunciation of impiety includes not only the chief of those "lesser lights," the Christian Fathers and Jewish Commentators, but also those "two great lights," Jesus and Paul, seeing that each of these affirmed the mystic sense of Scripture, and the duty of subordinating the Letter to the Spirit and seeking within the veil for the meaning. The fact is, that in their use of the term "obvious," the literalists beg the questions involved. Those questions are, —To what faculty is the sense of Scripture obvious,—to the outer or the inner perception? and,—To which of these two orders of perception does the apprehension of spiritual things rightly belong? Nothing, assuredly, can be more obvious than the "impiety" of setting aside the account which Holy Writ gives of itself, and ascribing to it falsehood, folly, or immorality, on the strength of outward appearance, such as is the letter.[1] To those whom this volume represents, it is absolutely obvious that the literal sense is not the sense intended; and that they who insist upon that sense incur the reproach cast by Paul when, referring to the veil which Moses put over his face, he says: "For their *minds* were blinded; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remaineth unlifted. Even unto this day the veil is upon their hearts."

We will endeavour briefly to exhibit the principles of this conclusion. The first lesson to be learnt in the school of philosophy is the truth that the mind can apprehend and

[1] See further as to this *The Bible's Own Account of Itself*, by Edward Maitland, Second Edition (1905), Preface.

assimilate that only which presents itself mentally. In other words, the objective must be translated into the subjective before it can become pabulum for the spiritual part of man. Truth is never phenomenal, but always metaphysical. The senses apprehend and are concerned with phenomena. But the senses represent the physical part only of man, and not that selfhood which the philosopher intends when he speaks of Man. This, the true ego, cannot come into relation with, or take account of, events and persons which present themselves phenomenally and objectively only. Thus, they are but vehicles and symbols by which truths, principles, and processes are conveyed to the subjective apprehension,—the hieroglyphs, so to speak, in which these are portrayed. Belonging to time and to matter, persons and events are—in their phenomenal aspect—related only to the exterior and perishable man; while principles and truths, being noumenal and eternal, are cognisable only by that in man which, being also noumenal and eternal, is of like nature with them, namely his subjective and spiritual part. For the apprehender and that which is apprehended must belong to the same category. And as the former is, necessarily, the purely rational principle in man, the latter also must be purely rational. For this reason, therefore, in order to maintain its proper spirituality, religion must always—as Schelling points out—present itself esoterically, in universals and in mysteries. Otherwise, being dependent for its existence upon the continuance of an environment merely physical and sensible, it becomes as evanescent as is this. From which it follows

that so long as we regard religious truth as essentially constituted of and dependent upon causes and effects appertaining to the physical plane, we have not yet grasped its real nature, and are spiritually unconscious and unilluminate. That which is true in religion is for spirit alone.

The necessary subjectivity of truth was affirmed also by Kant, who regarded the historical element in Scripture as indifferent, and declared that the transition of the Creed into a purely spiritual faith, would be the coming of the kingdom of God. Similarly the mystic Weigelius (A.D. 1650) says that in order to be efficacious for salvation, that which is divinely written concerning the Christ on the objective plane, must be transferred to the subjective plane and substantialised in the individual, being interiorly enacted by him. And the pious and learned translator of the Hermetic books, Doctor Everard, writes:—"I say there is not one word (of Scripture) true according to the letter. Yet I say that every word, every syllable, every letter, is true. But they are true as He intended them that spake them; they are true as God meant them, not as men will have them" (*Gospel Treasury Opened*, A.D. 1659).

The reason is that matter and its attributes constitute but the middle term in a series the Alpha and Omega of which are spirit. The world of ultimate effects, like that of ultimate causes, is spiritual; and no finality can belong to the plane of their middle term, this being a plane only of transition. The absolute is, first, pure abstract thought. It is, next, a *heterisation* of that thought by disruption into the atomism of time and space, or projection into nature, a pro-

cess whereby, from being non-molecular, it becomes molecular. Thirdly, it returns from this condition of self-externalisation and self-alienation back into itself, resolving the heterisation of nature, and becoming again subjective and —as only thus it can become—self-cognisant. Such—as formulated by Hegel—is, under manifestation, the process of universals; and such is, necessarily, the process also of particulars, which are the product of universals. Wherefore man, as the microcosm, must imitate, and identify himself with, the macrocosm, and subjectivise, or spiritualise, his experience before he can relate it to that ultimate principle of himself which constitutes the ego, or selfhood.

Such a view of religion as this, however, is obviously incomprehensible save by the educated and developed: its terms and its ideas alike being beyond the capacity of the generality. This book, therefore, and the work which it inaugurates, are addressed to the former class;—to persons of culture and thought, who, recognising the defects of the popular belief, have abandoned, as hopeless, the attempt to systematise it and to relate it to their mental needs. There never can be one presentation of religion suited equally to all classes and castes of men; and the attempt of the Church to compass this impossibility has, of necessity, resulted in the alienation of those who are unable to accept the crude, coarse fare dealt out to the multitude. Enacting the part of a Procrustes in respect of things spiritual, she has tried to fit to one measure minds of all kinds and dimensions, in total disregard of the apostolic dictum:—"We speak wisdom among the full-grown.

. . . But not unto you as unto the spiritual, but as unto the carnal, unto babes in Christ, feeding you with milk, not with meat, being not yet able to receive it."

For these, then,—the uninstructed and undeveloped,—the Church must continue to speak with veiled face, in parable and symbol. Our appeal is to those who, having attained their intellectual and spiritual majority, have put away childish things, and who, accordingly,—instead of being content with the husk of the letter, and ignoring the spirit for the form, or limiting it by the form,—are impelled by the very necessity of their nature to seek behind the veil and to read the spirit through the form, that "with unveiled face they may behold the glory of the Lord, and be transformed into the same image." They who are thus ripe will in these pages learn what is the Reality which only Mind can apprehend; and will understand that it belongs not to the objective and phenomenal plane of mundane history, but to the subjective and noumenal plane of their own souls, where seeking they will find enacted the process of Fall, Exile, Incarnation, Redemption, Resurrection, Ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit, and—as the sequel—the attainment of Nirvâna, the "peace that passeth understanding." For those thus initiated the mind is no longer concerned with history; the phenomenal becomes recognised as the illusory,—a shadow projected by the Real, having no substance in itself, and an accident only of the Real. One thing is and abides,—the Soul in man,—Mother of God, immaculate; descending—as Eve—into matter and generation; assumed—as Mary—beyond

matter into life eternal. One state, supreme and perfect, epitomises and resolves all others;—the state of Christ, promised in the dawn of evolution; displayed in its process; glorified at its consummation. To realise the assumption of Mary, to attain to the stature of her Son,—these ends and aspirations constitute the desire of the illuminate. And it is in order to indicate them anew and the method of seeking them intelligently, that this book is written.

This preface may—it seems to us—fittingly conclude with a token of the estimation *The Perfect Way* has won from persons specially qualified to judge it. The following is selected from numerous communications to the like effect, coming, not only from various parts of the world, but from members of various nationalities, races and faiths, and showing that our book is already accomplishing far and wide its mission as an *Eirenicon.*

The veteran student of the "divine science," a reference to whom, as the friend, disciple, and literary heir of the renowned kabalist and magian, the late Abbé Constant ("Eliphas Levi"), will be for all initiates a sufficient indication of his personality,[2] thus writes to us:—

"As with the corresponding Scriptures of the past, the appeal on behalf of your book is, really, to miracles: but with the difference that in your case the miracles are in-

[2] The reference is to Baron Giuseppe Spedalieri, a native of Sicily who resided at Marseilles, and who, Edward Maitland said, was "the ripest living veteran of spiritual science in Christendom" (*Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., pp. 31, 154; *Story of A. K. and E. M.*, p. 189).

tellectual ones and incapable of simulation, being miracles of interpretation. And they have the further distinction of doing no violence to common sense by infringing the possibilities of Nature; while they are in complete accord with all mystical traditions, and especially with the great Mother of these,—the Kabbala. The miracles, such as I am describing, are to be found in *The Perfect Way*, in kind and number unexampled, they who are the best qualified to judge will be the most ready to affirm.

"And here, *apropos* of these renowned Scriptures, permit me to offer you some remarks on the Kabbala as we have it. It is my opinion,—

"(1) That this tradition is far from being genuine, and such as it was on its original emergence from the sanctuaries.

"(2) That when Guillaume Postel—of excellent memory—and his brother Hermetists of the later middle age—the Abbot Trithemius and others—predicted that these sacred books of the Hebrews should become known and understood at the end of the era, and specified the present time for that event, they did not mean that such knowledge should be limited to the mere divulgement of these particular Scriptures, but that it would have for its base a new illumination, which should eliminate from them all that has been ignorantly or wilfully introduced, and should re-unite that great tradition with its source by restoring it in all its purity.

"(3) That this illumination has just been accomplished, and has been manifested in *The Perfect Way*. For in this book we find all that there is of truth in the Kabbala, sup-

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

According to classical legend, the Goddess Athena had once for votary a fair virgin named Medusa, who, becoming vain of her beauty and weary of the pure service of the maiden Goddess, introduced folly and defilement into the very sanctuary of the Temple in which she was wont to worship. Thereupon a terrible fate overtook her. The beautiful face, which had been the cause of her fall, assumed an aspect so terrible as to blight and petrify all who looked upon it; her tresses, once the chief object of her pride, were changed into vipers; and the hands which had ministered to heaven became as the talons of a bird of prey. Thus transformed into a Gorgon, she brought forth monsters, and for a time devastated the earth. At length the hero Perseus, "Son of God," commissioned by Athena and Hermes, and armed by them with wings and sword and shield, slew the terrible creature, and smote off her venomous head. This exploit—itself fraught with great perils—was followed by the achievement of another not less difficult. Andromeda, daughter of the Æthiopian king, being doomed to become the prey of a Dragon which long had ravaged her father's

coasts, was already chained to a rock on the seashore and on the point of being devoured, when Perseus—divinely guided to the scene of the intended sacrifice—vanquished the Dragon and delivered the princess. And, having won her love and espoused her, the son of Zeus bore her away from her father's kingdom into heaven, to shine for ever beside him, redeemed, immortal, and glorious.

Now, the names Medusa and Andromeda have a common root, and signify respectively "guardian" or "house" of Wisdom, and "the ruler" or "helpmeet" of Man. They are thus typical names, the first, of the Church, the second, of the Soul. And the two myths of which their bearers are the heroines, together constitute a prophecy—or perpetual verity—having special application to the present epoch. Medusa is that system which—originally pure and beautiful, the Church of God and the guardian of the Mysteries—has, through corruption and idolatry, become "the hold of every unclean thing," and the mother of a monstrous brood. And, moreover, like the once lovely face of Medusa, the Doctrine which bore originally the divine impress and reflected the Celestial Wisdom Herself, has—through the fall of the Church—become converted into Dogma so pernicious and so deadly as to blight and destroy the reason of all who come under its control. And the Perseus of the myth is the true Humanity—earth-born indeed, but heaven-begotten—which, endowed by Wisdom and Understanding with the wings of Courage, the shield of Intuition, and the sword of Science, is gone forth to smite and destroy the corrupt Church and

to deliver the world from its blighting influence. But it is not enough that the Gorgon be slain. A task yet greater and more glorious awaits achievement. Andromeda, the Soul, the better part of Man, is on the point of being devoured outright by the baleful dragon of Negation, the agent of the lower nature, and the ravager of all the hopes of mankind. Her name—identical with the terms in which is described the first Woman of Hebrew story—indicates her as the helpmeet and ruler of man; her parentage denotes the origin of the Soul from the astral Fire or Æther, signified by the land of Æthopis;[1] the brazen fetters with which she is bound to the rock, typify the present bondage of the Divine in man to his material part; and her redemption, espousal, and exaltation by the hero Perseus, prefigure the final and crowning achievement of the Son of God, who is no other than the Spiritual Manhood, fortified and sustained by Wisdom and Thought. Of no avail against the monster which threatens to annihilate the Soul, are the old devices of terrorism, persecution, and thraldom by which the corrupt Church sought to subjugate mankind to her creed. The Deliverer of the Soul must be free as air, borne on the wings of a Thought that knows no fear and no restraint, and armed with the blade, two-edged and facing every way, of a will omnipotent alike for attack and defence, and with the rod of a perfect Science. He must be bent, not on destruction merely, but on salvation likewise; and his sword must be as apt to smite the fetters from the limbs of Andromeda, as to deal the stroke of death to the Gorgon. It is not enough

[1] See Lect. VI., 6.

and of faction from within, has at length succumbed to the combined arms of scientific and moral criticism. But this very overthrow, this very demolition, creates a new void, to the existence of which the present condition of the world and the apprehensions and cravings everywhere expressed, bear ample testimony. On all sides men are asking them-elves, "Who will show us any good?" To whom or to hat, if the old system be fallen, shall we turn for counsel nd salvation from Doom? Under what roof shall we helter ourselves if the whole Temple be demolished, and 'not one stone be left upon another that shall not be hrown down?" What way shall we take to Sion, if the ld road be buried beneath the avalanche? Agnosticism nd Pessimism have seized upon the best intellects of the age. Conscience has become eclipsed by self-interest, mind bscured by matter, and man's percipience of his higher ature and needs suppressed in favour of his lower. The rule of conduct among men is fast becoming that of the beast of prey:—self before all, and that the earthly, brutish, and ignoble self. Everywhere are the meaning and uses even of life seriously called in question; everywhere is it sought to sustain humanity by means which are in them-selves subversive of humanity; everywhere are the fountains of the great deep of human society breaking up, and a deluge is seen to be impending, the height, extent, and duration of which no one can forecast. And nowhere yet is discernible the Ark, by taking refuge in which mankind may surmount and survive the flood.

Nevertheless this Ark so anxiously looked for, this Way

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so painfully sought, this work of Reconstruction so sorely needed, are all attainable by man. The certainty of their attainment is involved in the nature itself of existence, and ratified in every expression given to the mysteries of that nature from the beginning of the world.

The prime object of the present work is, then, not tc demolish but to reconstruct. Already the needful servic of destruction has been widely and amply rendered. Tl old temple has been thrown down and despoiled, and th "children of Israel" have been carried away captive t "Babylon,"—the mystic name of the stronghold of Ma terialism. As it is written; "The vessels of the House o the Lord"—that is, the doctrines of the Church—"grea and small, and the treasures of the Temple and of th King and of the princes, were carried away to Babylon. And the enemies set fire to the House of God, and brok down the wall of Jerusalem,"—that is, the Soul,—"an burnt all her towers, and whatsoever was precious they destroyed."

Time it is now for the fulfilment of the second and last act of the prophetical drama;—

"Thus saith Cyrus,"—that is, Κύριος, the Lord, the Christ;—"All the Kingdoms of the earth hath the God of heaven given me, and He hath charged me to build Him again a House in Jerusalem." "Who is there of you, who will go up and build again the Temple of the Lord God of Israel?"

In these words is expressed the intention of the writers of this book. And if they have preferred to withhold their

names, it is neither because they distrust the genuineness of their commission or the soundness of their work, nor because they shrink from the responsibility incurred; but in order that their work may rest upon its own merits and not upon theirs, real or supposed;—in order, that is, that it may be judged, and not pre-judged one way or the other. Such reservation is in accordance with its whole tenour. For the criterion alone to which appeal is made on its behalf is the Understanding, and this on the ground that it is contrary to the nature of Truth to prevail by force of authority, or of aught other than the understanding; since Truth—how transcendent soever it be—has its witness in the Mind, and no other testimony can avail it. If truth be not demonstrable to mind, it is obvious that man, who is essentially mind, and the product of mind, cannot recognise or appropriate it. What is indispensable is, that appeal be made to the whole mind, and not to one department of it only.

In this book no new thing is told; but that which is ancient—so ancient that either it or its meaning has been lost—is restored and explained. But, while accepting neither the presentations of a conservative orthodoxy, nor the conclusions of a destructive criticism, its writers acknowledge the services rendered by both to the cause of Truth. For, like the Puritans who coated with plaster and otherwise covered and hid from view the sacred images and decorations which were obnoxious to them, orthodoxy has at least preserved through the ages the symbols which contain the Truth, beneath the errors with which it has

overlaid them. And criticism, however fiercely infidel, has, by the very act of destruction, cleared the way for rebuilding. It has fulfilled the man's function,—that of analysis, and made possible the woman's,—that of synthesis. And this is according to the Divine order.

In both nature and method, therefore, this book is mainly *interpretative*, and, consequently, *reconciliatory*. And it is this, not only in respect of the Hebrew, Christian, Oriental and Classic systems in particular, but in respect also of modern thought and human experience in general. It aims at making at-one-ment between Mind and Heart by bringing together Mercy—that is, Religion—and Truth—that is, Science. It seeks to assure man that his best and most powerful friends on every plane are Liberty and Reason, as his worst enemies are Ignorance and Fear; and that until his thought is free enough and strong enough to bear him aloft to "heaven," as well as to "the lowermost parts of the earth," he is no true Son of Hermes, whose typical name is Thought, and who yet is, in his supremest vocation, the Messenger and Minister of God "the Father."

ADVENT, 1881.

ABSTRACT OF ARGUMENT AND CONTENTS.

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION pp. *i–xlix*

PREFACE TO THE SECOND (REVISED) EDITION . . . . . . pp. *l–lxii*

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION pp. *lxiii–lxx*

LECTURE THE FIRST.

INTRODUCTORY.

PART I. Purpose of this book, to supply the existing need of a perfect system of thought and life by one founded in the nature of existence. This not a new invention, but a recovery of the original system which was the basis of all religions. Its recovery due to the same means by which it was originally received, namely, the Intuition, which represents the knowledges acquired by the Soul in its past existences, and complements the intellect, being itself quickened and enhanced

by illumination of the Spirit. Revelation a proper prerogative of man, belonging to him in virtue of his nature and constitution, and crowning the reason. God the supreme Reason. The Understanding, the "Rock" of the true Church. Illustrations of Method, classic and rabbinical. Sketch of Doctrine. Spirit and Matter: their nature, relations, and essential identity. Existence and Being. The Kalpa, Sabbath, and Nirvâna. Divinity of Substance: its unity and trinity, and mode of individuation and development. The true doctrine of creation by evolution; found in all religions, as also that of the progression and migration of Souls; personal and historical testimony to its truth; recognised in Old and New Testaments. Rudimentary man. The Sphinx . . . . . pp. 1–25

PART II. Relation of the system recovered to that in possession. The true heir. Religion, being founded in the nature of existence, is necessarily non-historical, independent of times, places, and persons, and appeals perpetually to the mind and conscience. Objections anticipated. Persistency of religious ideas due to their reality. The apparently new not necessarily really new. Christianity not exempt from the influences which caused

the deterioration of Judaism. Its future development by means of new revelation foretold by its Founder. Need of such new revelation to preserve, not only religion, but humanity from extinction. The "man of sin" and "abomination that maketh desolate." Substitution of Gospel of Force for Gospel of Love. One name whereby is salvation, but many bearers. The Christs . pp 25–37

LECTURE THE SECOND.

THE SOUL; AND THE SUBSTANCE OF EXISTENCE

PART I. The Soul, universal or individual, the supreme subject and object of culture: the essential self, to know which is the only wisdom, involving the knowledge of God. Mysticism or Spiritualism, and Materialism, the doctrines respectively of Substance or Spirit, and of Phenomenon. Matter a mode or condition of Spirit, and indispensable to its manifestation. The object of all religion and subject of all revelation the redemption of Spirit from Matter. Necessity to creation of the idea of a no-God. The ascent from Nature's Seeming to God's Being. The recovered system and Materialism respectively as Phoibos and Python . . . . . pp. 38–44

PART II. The Soul as individual, its genesis and nature: as the divine idea, eternal in its nature, yet perishable if uninformed of the Spirit. The "Fire of the hearth:" the Divine breath. Convergence and divergence: the celestial Nirvâna, and that of annihilation. The end of the persistently evil. The planet and its offspring. The fourfold nature of existence, alike in macrocosm and microcosm, due to differentialities of polarisation of original substance . . . . pp. 44–50

PART III. The Soul as individual, its history and progress: commencing in the simplest organisms, it works upwards, moulding itself according to the tendencies encouraged by it; its final object to escape the need of a body and return to the condition of pure Spirit. Souls various in quality. The parable of the Talents . . . . . . pp. 50–52

PART IV. Of the nature of God; as Living Substance, One; as Life and Substance, Twain; the Potentiality of all things; the absolute Good, through the limitation of whom by Matter comes evil. Subsists prior to creation as Invisible Light. As Life, God is *He*; as Substance, *She*; respectively the Spirit and Soul universal and individual; the Soul the

feminine element in man, having its representative in woman. God the original, abstract Humanity. The Seven Spirits of God. "Nature." The heavenly Maria, her characteristics and symbols. As Soul or Intuition, she is the "woman" by whom man attains his true manhood. The defect of the age in this respect. No intuition, no organon of knowledge. The Soul alone such an organon . . . . pp. 52–58

PART V. Divine Names, denotive of characteristics. Function of religion to enable man to manifest the Divine Spirit within him. Man as an expression of God. The Christs, why called Sungods. The Zodiacal planisphere a Bible or hieroglyph of the Soul's history. Bibles, by whom written. The "Gift of God" . . . . pp. 58–63

LECTURE THE THIRD.

THE VARIOUS ORDERS OF SPIRITS; AND HOW TO DISCERN THEM.

PART I. The sphere of the astral, its four circuli and their respective occupants. The Shades; purgatory; "hell"; "devils"; "the Devil"; possession by devils; "souls in prison";

"under the elements"; spirits of the elements, subject to the human will; souls of the dead; the *anima bruta* and *anima divina*. Metempsychosis and reincarnation; conditions of the latter; descent to lower grades; cause of the Soul's loss . . . . pp. 64–75

PART II. The astral or magnetic spirits by which, ordinarily, "mediums" are "controlled"; reflects rather than spirits; difficulty of distinguishing them from Souls; elements of error and deception; delusive character of astral influences; their characteristics; danger of a negative attitude of mind; necessity of a positive attitude for Divine communication; spirits elemental and elementary; *genii loci*; cherubim . . . . pp. 76–85

PART III. The sphere of the celestial; the procession of Spirit; the triangle of life; the Genius or guardian angel, his genesis, nature, and functions; the Gods, or Archangels . pp. 85–93

LECTURE THE FOURTH.

THE ATONEMENT.

PART I. This the central doctrine of religion, and, like the Kosmos, fourfold in its nature.

What the doctrine is not; its corruption by materialism; priestly degradation of the character of Deity. The Bible represents the conflict between prophet and priest, the former as the minister of the intuition, and the latter as the minister of sense . . pp. 94–99

PART II. The occult side of the sacrificial system. Effusion of blood efficacious in the evocation of sub-human spirits, as shown by various examples. These spirits visible in the fumes of the sacrifices. Astral spirits personate the celestials. Abhorrence of the true prophet for bloodshed, illustrated in Buddha's rebuke to the priests. The orthodox doctrine of vicarious atonement, a travesty, due to astral spirits, of the true doctrine. Pernicious effects of the use of blood (or flesh) for food; impossibility, on such diet, of attaining full perception of divine truth . . . pp. 99–105

PART III. Antiquity and universality of the Cross as the symbol of Life physical and spiritual. Its application to the doctrine of the Atonement fourfold, having a separate meaning for each sphere of man's nature. Of these meanings the first is of the physical and outer, denoting the crucifixion or rejection of the Man of God by the world. The

second is intellectual, and denotes the crucifixion or conquest in man of his lower nature. The third, which refers to the Soul, implies the passion and oblation of himself, whereby the man regenerate obtains the power—by the demonstration of the supremacy of Spirit over matter—to become a Redeemer to others. The Fourth appertains to the Celestial and innermost, and denotes the perpetual sacrifice of God's Life and Substance for the creation and salvation of His creatures. The pantheistic nature of the true doctrine . pp. 105–117

LECTURE THE FIFTH.

THE NATURE AND CONSTITUTION OF THE EGO.

PART I. Psyche as the Soul and true Ego the result of Evolution, being individualised through Matter . . . . . pp. 118–123

PART II. Man's two personalities. *Karma*, or the results of past conduct and consequent destiny. The soul essentially immaculate . . pp. 123–124

PART III. The Ego more than the sum total of the consciousnesses composing the system, as representing these combined and polarised to a higher plane. The Psyche alone subjective and capable of knowledge . . . pp. 125–135

PART IV. The Shade, the Ghost, and the Soul, their respective natures and destinies . pp. 135–139

PART V. The *Anima Mundi*, or Picture-World. The soul of the planet, like that of the individual, transmigrates and passes on . pp. 139–141

PART VI. The Evolution of the Ego, and therein of the Church of Christ, implied in the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the B.V.M. . . pp. 141–144

LECTURE THE SIXTH.

THE FALL (*No. I.*).

PART I. The first Church; its type the Kaabeh, or cube, denoting sixfoldness; dates from "Paradise." The Merkaba, or vehicle of God, drawn by the four elements. The four rivers of Eden. Allegorical character of the Mystic Scriptures; how recovered by Esdras; their origin and corruption . . . pp. 145–153

PART II. The Parable of the Fall: its signification fourfold, being one for each sphere of existence; the first, physical and social pp. 154–161

PART III. The second signification rational and philosophical; the third, psychic and personal . . . . pp. 161–166

PART IV. The fourth signification spiritual and kosmical. The Restoration implied in the Sabbath, and prophesied in the Zodiac, and in the arms of Pope Leo XIII. . . pp. 166–171

PART V. A new Annunciation . . . pp. 172–175

LECTURE THE SEVENTH.

THE FALL (*No. II.*).

PART I. Interpretation of Scripture dual, intellectual and intuitional, or exterior and interior; the Soul as the Woman, through whose aspiration to God man becomes Man in the mystic sense, and made in the image of God; and through whose inclination to Matter he falls from that image. As the Fall is through loss of purity, so the Redemption is through restoration of purity . . pp. 176–187

PART II. The Soul's history as allegorised in the books of Genesis and Revelation . . pp. 187–194

PART III. Source of errors of Biblical interpretation. The historical basis of the Fall. The Church as the Woman. Rise and Fall of original Church. A primitive mystic community. The source of doctrine, interior and superior to priesthoods . . . pp. 194–204

PART IV. Nature and method of historical Fall. The three steps by retracing which the Restoration will come. Tokens of its approach . . . . . . pp. 204–209

LECTURE THE EIGHTH.

THE REDEMPTION.

PART I. The "great work" the Redemption of Spirit from Matter: first in the individual, next in the universal. Definition of mystic terms used to denote the process: "Passion," "Crucifixion," "Death," "Burial," "Resurrection," "Ascension" . . . . . pp. 210–217

PART II. The Man perfected and having power: the "philosopher's stone," and kindred terms; the Adept and the Christ; sense in which the latter may be called a medium for the Highest; not as ordinarily understood: the Hierarch or Magian, his qualifications and conditions . . . . . . pp. 217–224

PART III. Design of the Gospels to present perfect character of Man Regenerate; selection of Jesus as subject; Church's failure of comprehension through loss of spiritual vision, due to Materialism. Answer to objection.

Jesus as Liberator necessarily spiritual; Paul's view. Method of Gospel symbolism; the miracles; kosmic order of Gospels . . pp. 225–232

PART IV. Parentage of the Man Regenerate. Joseph and V. Mary as representatives of Mind and Soul. The two Josephs. Catholic tradition and hagiology. Mary Magdalen as type of Soul; also the Seven Apocalyptic Churches. Identification of the Magi; the Stable and Cave of the Nativity. The John Baptist within. The Acts of the B.V.M. Ascension and Assumption. Final State of Soul . . . . pp. 232–244

PART V. The Twelve Gates of the Heavenly Salem; the Tabernacle; the Round Table and its "bright Lord;" the Number of Perfection; the genealogy of the Man Regenerate; "Christ" no incarnate God or angel, but the highest human. The world's present condition due to sacerdotal degradation of truth. Christian Gospels represent later stages only of regeneration, the earlier ones having been exemplified in the systems of Pythagoras and Buddha. Christianity framed with direct reference to these, not to supersede but to complete them; Buddha

and Jesus being necessary to each other, as head and heart of same system. Of these combined will be produced the Religion and Humanity of the future; hence the import of the connection between England and the East. The Transfiguration, a prophecy. "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," their relation to the mysteries of Brahma, Isis and Iacchos. The "Kings of the East." The "Eastern Question"; its interior significance; the destiny of Islamism . . . . . pp. 244–257

LECTURE THE NINTH.

GOD AS THE LORD; OR, THE DIVINE IMAGE.

PART I. The two modes of Deity; God as the Lord, in the Bible, the Kabbala, and the Bhagavad Gîtâ. Swedenborg and his doctrine: his limitations and their cause. The Hermetic doctrine. The "Mount of the Lord." True meanings of "Mystery"; sacerdotal degradation of the term, and its evil results . . . . pp. 258–264

PART II. Function of the Understanding in regard to things spiritual. Its place in the systems human and divine. The "Spirit of Understanding," his various names and

symbols, and relation to the Christ. Cognate myths in illustration. Hermes as regarded by the Neoplatonists and by modern Materialists. Mystic and Materialist, the feud between them. The School of Torturers. The "Mystery of Godliness," according to the Kabbala and Paul. The Pauline doctrine concerning Woman; its contrast with the doctrine of Jesus. Woman according to Plato, Aristotle, Philo, the Fathers, the Church, the Reformation, Milton, Islamism, and Mormonism . . . . . . pp. 264–282

PART III. Charges whereby it is sought to discredit the system of the Mystics; Plagiarism and Enthusiasm: the signification and value of the latter. Ecstasy: its nature and function. Mystics and Materialists, their respective standpoints. Conspiracy of modern science against the Soul. Materialists, ancient and modern, contrasted . . . pp. 282–291

PART IV. Man's perception of God sensible as well as mental. The divine Unity, Duality, Trinity, and Plurality. The Logos, or Manifestor. The mystery of the human Face pp. 291–295

PART V. The Vision of Adonai . . . pp. 296–299

PART VI. "Christ" as the culmination of Humanity and point of junction with Deity. The *Credo* of the Elect . . . pp. 299–302

APPENDICES.

PAGE

I. THE CONSTITUTION OF EXISTENCE: ITS NATURE AND UNITY 305
(Being Lecture V. of the First Edition).

II. PARAGRAPHS 27 TO 41 OF LECTURE VIII. OF THE SECOND EDITION 327

III. "THE PERFECT WAY" AND ITS CRITICS . 340

INDEX 359

ILLUSTRATIONS.

LECTURES.

PAGE

FIG. 1. The Cherubim of Ezekiel and the Apocalypse . 147

FIG. 2. The Tabernacle in the Wilderness 246

APPENDICES.

FIG. 3. Schematic Section of the Typical Organic Cell . 311

FIG. 4. Schematic Section of the Typical Wandering Cell 316

FIG. 5. Break-up of Fixed Cell 316

FIGS. 6, 7, 8. Schemata showing the Magnetic Molecular Poles in Health and in Disease (Sections) . . 325

FIG. 9. Section of the Great Pyramid of Gizeh . . . 334

FIG. 10. The Marriage of the Hierophant 337

"And the Lord God said unto the serpent . . . I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."—*Gen.* iii. 14, 15.

"And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars."—*Apoc.* xii. 1.

THE PERFECT WAY;

OR,

THE FINDING OF CHRIST.

LECTURE THE FIRST.[1]

INTRODUCTORY.

PART I.

1. THE purpose of the Lectures, of which this is the first, is the exposition of a system of Doctrine and Life, at once scientific, philosophic, and religious, and adapted to all the needs and aspirations of mankind. This system is offered in substitution, on the one hand, for that traditional and dogmatic Conventionalism which, by its failure to meet the tests of science and to respond to the moral instincts, is now by thoughtful persons nearly or wholly discarded; and, on the other hand, for that agnostic Materialism which is rapidly overspreading the world to the destruction of all that is excellent in the nature of man.

2. But although offered in substitution both for that which experience has shown to be defective, and that which

[1] This lecture was delivered by Anna Kingsford on Monday the 16th May, 1881. Paragraphs 1–6; 14–18; 22–24; 30–32; 52, 53 and 55 were written by Edward Maitland: and paragraphs 7–13; 19–21; 26–29; 43–51; 54 and 56 were written by Anna Kingsford (*Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., pp. 16, 17, 32).

is so recent as to be only now in course of reception, the system to be proposed is not itself new; and its present exposition represents, not an Invention as ordinarily understood, but a Restoration. For, as will be shown indubitably, there has been in the world from the earliest ages a system which fulfils all the conditions requisite for endurance; a system which, being founded in the nature of Existence itself, is eternal in its truth and application, and needs but due understanding and observance to enable man by means of it to attain to the highest perfection and satisfaction he can by any possibility imagine or desire. And, as also will be shown, this system is no other than that which all the great religions of the world have, under various guises and with varying degrees of success, striven to express.

3. Our object, therefore, is to restore and rehabilitate the Truth, by divesting it of all the many limitations, degenerations, perversions, and distortions to which throughout the ages it has been subjected; and by explaining the real meaning of the formulas and symbols which thus far have served rather to conceal than to reveal it. That which we shall propound, therefore, will be no new doctrine or practice; but that only which is either so old as to have become forgotten, or so profound as to have escaped the superficial gaze of modern eyes.

4. Now, in order to be entitled to a hearing in respect of a subject thus momentous and recondite, it is obviously necessary that the claimant should be able to plead some special qualification in the shape of the possession either of an exclusive source of information, or of an unusual faculty. Hence it becomes necessary to include in these introductory remarks an account of the qualification relied on in the present instance.

5. That which is thus claimed is at once a faculty and

a source of information, and is, in these days, of rare though not novel occurrence. It is that mode of the mind whereby, after exercising itself in an outward direction as Intellect, in order to obtain cognition of phenomena, it returns towards its centre as Intuition, and by ascertaining the essential idea of the fact apprehended through the senses, completes the process of its thought. And just as only by the combined and equal operation of the modes termed centrifugal and centripetal, of force, the solar system is sustained; so only by the equilibrium of the modes, intellectual and intuitional, of the mind, can man complete the system of his thought and attain to certitude of truth. And as well might we attempt to construct the solar system by means of an exercise of force in one direction, the human system by means of one sex, or the nervous system by means of one kind of roots only, as to attain to knowledge by means of one mode only of mind. It is, however, precisely in this manner that the materialistic hypothesis errs; and by its error it has forfeited all claim to be accounted a system.

6. The Intuition, then, is that operation of the mind whereby we are enabled to gain access to the interior and permanent region of our nature, and there to possess ourselves of the knowledge which in the long ages of her past existences the Soul has made her own. For that in us which perceives and permanently remembers is the Soul. And inasmuch as, in order to obtain her full development, she remains for thousands of years in connection, more or less close, with Matter, until, perfected by experience of all the lessons afforded by the body, she passes on to higher conditions of being; it follows that no knowledge which the race has once acquired in the past can be regarded as hopelessly lost to the present.

7. But the memory of the soul is not the only factor in spiritual evolution. The faculty which we have named the Intuition, is completed and crowned by the operation of Divine Illumination. Theologically, this illumination is spoken of as the Descent of the Holy Spirit, or outpouring of the heavenly efflux, which kindles into a flame in the soul, as the sun's rays in a lens. Thus, to the fruits of the soul's experience in the past, is added the "grace" or luminance of the Spirit;—the baptism of Fire which, falling from on high, sanctifies and consummates the results of the baptism of Water springing from the earth. To be illumined by this inward Light, to be united with this abiding divinity, was ever the ardent aspiration of the seeker after God in all times and of all lands, whether Egyptian Epopt, Hindû Yogee, Greek Neoplatonist, Arab Sufi, or Christian Gnostic. By the last named it was styled the Paraclete and Revealer, by whom man is led into all truth. With the Hindû it was Atman, the All-seeing, not subject to rebirths like the soul, and redeeming from the vicissitudes of destiny. By the combined operation of this Light, and the enhancement it effects in the intuitions of the soul,—enabling her to convert her knowledge into wisdom,—the human race has been from age to age perpetually carried up to higher levels of its evolution, and will in due course be enabled to substantialise in itself and to *be* all that in the past it has known and desired of perfection.

8. These Lectures, then, represent the result of intuitional memory, quickened and enhanced, we believe, by some measure of the divine influx, and developed by the only mode of life ever found compatible with sound philosophic aspirations. And of the doctrine we seek to restore, the basis is the Pre-existence and Perfectibility of the Soul. The former, because, but for her persistence, progressive

genesis, or gradual becoming, would be impossible. For development depends upon memory, and is the result of the intelligent application of knowledge gained by experience, in satisfaction of the needs of the individual; the sense of need being complemented by a sense of power.

And the Perfectibility; because, as a portion of the Divine Being—which is God—constituted of the Divine Substance and illumined by the Divine Spirit, she, the Soul, is necessarily capable of all that her nature implies; and competent to realise for the individuality animated by her, the injunction of the great Master of mystical science; "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect."

9. It is necessary for the elucidation of our system to speak yet further of the constitution of man. Concerning this, our doctrine is that which has prevailed from the earliest times, and in all philosophical religions. According to this doctrine, man is possessed of a fourfold nature, a speciality which differentiates him from all other creatures. The four elements which constitute him are, counting from without inwards, the material body, the fluidic perisoul or astral body, the soul or individual, and the spirit, or divine Father and life of his system. This last it is whose kingdom is described as the leaven taken by the woman—the divine Sophia or Wisdom—and hidden in three measures of meal, namely, the soul, the perisoul, and the body, until the whole is leavened; until, that is, the whole man is so permeated and lightened by it that he is finally transmuted into Spirit, and becomes "one with God."

10. This doctrine of the fourfold nature of man, finds expression also in the Hebrew Scriptures, being symbolised by the four rivers of Eden—or human nature—flowing from one source, which is God; and by the four elemental living

beings of Ezekiel, and their four wheels or circles, each of which denotes a region and a principality or power. It has its correspondence also in the four interpretations of all mystical Scriptures, which are the natural, the intellectual, the ethical, and the spiritual; and also in the unit of all organic existence, the physiologic cell. For this, as the student of Histology knows, is composed, from without inwards, first of cell-membrane or capsule, which is not a separable envelope, but a mere coagulative sheathing of its fluidic part; secondly, of the protoplasmic medium; thirdly, of the nucleus, itself a mode of protoplasmic substance; and, lastly, of an element not present in all cells, and often when present difficult to perceive, namely, the nucleolus, or inmost and perfectly transparent element. Thus does man, as the Microcosm of the Macrocosm, exemplify in every detail of his system the fundamental doctrine of the famous Hermetic philosophy by which the expression of every true Bible is controlled, the doctrine, namely, of Correspondence.

"*As is the outer, so is the inner; as is the small, so is the great: there is but one law; and He that worketh is One. Nothing is small, nothing is great in the Divine Economy.*"

11. In these words are contained at once the principle of the universe and the secret of the Intuition. She it is, the Divine woman of man's mental system, that opens to him the "perfect way," the "way of the Lord," that "path of the just which, as a shining light, shineth more and more unto the perfect day." And her complete restoration, crowning, and exaltation, is the one condition essential to that realisation of the ideal perfection of man's nature, which, mystically, is called the "Finding of Christ."

12. Now, the modes whereby the Intuition operates are

two, namely, Perception and Memory. By the former, man understands and interprets; by the latter he retains and utilises. Perceiving, recollecting, and applying, the mind enacts for itself a process analogous to that which occurs in the physical organism. For its operations correspond to the three physiological processes of Nutrition,—prehension, digestion, and absorption.

13. When the uninitiate person, or materialist, denies positively, as, with curious inconsistency, such persons do deny, the possibility of positive knowledge, and declares that "all we know is, nothing can be known," he speaks truly *so far as concerns himself and his fellows.* "The natural man," as the apostle declares, "perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit, for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them because they are spiritually discerned. But the spiritual man judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man." While the two orders here indicated refer to the inner and outer, or soul and body, of each individual, they refer also to the two great divisions of mankind,—they who as yet recognise the body only, and they who are so far unfolded in their interior nature as to recognise the soul also. Of these last is the initiate of sacred mysteries. Following his intuition, such a one directs the force of his mind inwards, and—provided his will is subordinated to and made one with the Divine will—passes within the veil, and knows even as he is known. For, as the apostle says again, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the man himself? So likewise, the things of God no man knoweth, save the Spirit of God within the man. And the Spirit knoweth all things and revealeth them unto the man." As thus by means of our Divine part we apprehend the Divine, no such apprehension is possible to him who does not, in some degree, reflect the Divine

image. "For if thine eye be evil, thy whole body is full of darkness. If then the very means of light in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

14. Matter is the antithetical ultimate of Spirit. Wherefore the enemy of spiritual vision is always Materiality. It is therefore by the dematerialisation of himself that man obtains the seeing eye and hearing ear in respect of Divine things. Dematerialisation consists, not in the separation of the soul from the body, but in the purification of both soul and body from engrossment by the things of sense. It is but another example of the doctrine of correspondence. As with the vision of things physical, so with that of things spiritual. Purity alike of instrument and medium is indispensable to perception.

15. This then is the nature and function of the Intuition. By living so purely in thought and deed as to prevent the interposition of any barrier between his exterior and his interior, his phenomenal and his substantial self; and by steadfastly cultivating harmonious relations between these two,—by subordinating the whole of his system to the Divine central Will whose seat is in the soul,—the man gains full access to the stores of knowledge laid up in his soul, and attains to the cognition alike of God and of the universe. And for him, as is said, "there is nothing hid which shall not be revealed."

16. And it is not his own memory alone that, thus endowed, he reads. The very planet of which he is the offspring, is like himself, a Person, and is possessed of a medium of memory. And he to whom the soul lends her ears and eyes, may have knowledge not only of his own past history, but of the past history of the planet, as beheld in the pictures imprinted in the magnetic light whereof the planet's memory consists. For there are actually ghosts of

events, manes of past circumstances, shadows on the protoplasmic mirror, which can be evoked.

17. But beyond and above the power to read the memory of himself or of the planet, is the power to penetrate to that innermost sphere wherein the soul obtains and treasures up her knowledge of God. This is the faculty whereby true revelation occurs. And revelation, even in this its highest sense, is, no less than reason, a proper prerogative of man, and belongs of right to him in his highest and completest measure of development.

18. For, placed as is the soul between the outer and the inner, mediator between the material and the spiritual, she looks inwards as well as outwards, and by experience learns the nature and method of God; and according to the degree of her elevation, purity, and desire, sees, reflects, and transmits God. It is in virtue of the soul's position between the worlds of substance and of phenomenon, and her consequent ability to refer *things* to their essential *ideas*, that in her, and her alone, resides an instrument of knowledge competent for the comprehension of Truth even the highest, which she only is able to behold face to face. It is no hyperbole that is involved in the saying, "The pure in heart see God." True, the *man* cannot see God. But the Divine in man sees God. And this occurs when, by means of his soul's union with God, the man becomes "one with the Father," and beholds God *with the eyes of God.*

19. That is not really knowledge which is without understanding. And the knowledge acquired by man through the soul, involves the understanding of all the things apprehended. Now, to understand a thing, is to get intellectually into, beyond, and around it; to know the reason of and for it; and to perceive clearly that it, and it only under the circumstances, is and could by any possi-

bility be true. Apart from such knowledge and understanding, belief is impossible. For that is not belief, in any sense worthy of the term, which is not of knowledge. And only that belief saves which is conjoined with understanding. For the Rock on which the true Church is built is the Understanding.

20. Such is the meaning of the words of Jesus on the memorable occasion of Peter's confession of him. It was not to the man Simon that was applied the apostrophe,—"Thou art Peter, the rock, and upon this rock will I build my Church;" but to the eternal and immutable Spirit of Understanding, by means of which the disciple had "found Christ." Thus the utterance of Jesus had reference, not to the man, but to the Spirit who informed the man, and whom with his spiritual eyes the Master discerned.

21. We have said that the soul, with the eyes of understanding, looks two ways, inwards as well as outwards. It is interesting to remember that this characteristic of the soul was typified under the image of the two-faced divinity, Janus Bifrons, or, as called by Plutarch, Iannos. Now Janus is the same as Jonas. Wherefore it is said that Simon, the expositor of the true doctrine, is the son of Jonas, meaning the Understanding. Janus is also the door-keeper, as is Peter in Catholic tradition. And for this reason a door is called *janua*, and the first month or entrance of the year, January. Janus thus came to be regarded, like Peter, as the elder, the renewer of time, and the guardian of the outermost circle of the system, and one therefore with Saturn. And as the former was called Pater Janus, so the latter was called Peter Jonas, the Rock of Understanding. And he is represented, as also is Peter, standing in a ship, and holding in one hand a staff, and in the other a key. By this is signified, that to the Under-

standing, born of the experiences of Time, belong the Rod of the Diviner—or the power of the Will—and the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Wherefore the real chief of the apostles in the true Church—that which, by its knowledge of the mysteries of existence, alone can open the gates of eternal life—is the Understanding.

22. The priesthoods, materialising, as is their wont, divine things, have applied the utterance of Jesus to the man Simon and his successors in office; but with the most disastrous consequences. For, ignoring the understanding, and putting asunder that which God has joined together,—Faith and Reason,—they have made something other than Mind the criterion of truth.

To this divorce between the elements masculine and feminine of man's intellectual system, is due the prevailing unbelief. For, converted thereby into superstition, religion has been rendered ridiculous; and instead of being exhibited as the Supreme Reason, God has been depicted as the Supreme Unreason. Against religion, as thus presented, mankind has done well to revolt. To have remained subject, had been intellectual suicide. Wherefore the last person entitled to reproach the world for its want of faith, is the Priest; since it is his degradation of the character of God that has ministered to unbelief. Suppressing the "woman," who is the intuition, by putting themselves in her place, the priests have suppressed also the man, who is the intellect. And so the whole of humanity is extinguished. Of the influences under which Sacerdotalism has acquired its evil repute, a full account will appear as we proceed.

23. In these lectures, then, the practice denounced will be exchanged for the original method of all true Churches; and appeal will be made to that *consensus* of all the facul-

ties, sensible, intellectual, moral, and spiritual, comprised in the constitution of man, wherein consists Common Sense. It is not upon any authority of book, person, tradition, or order, that we ourselves rely, or that we invite the attention of others. Reference will indeed be made, as already, to various sacred and other sources, but only for illustration, interpretation, or confirmation. For, confident in the knowledge that all things have their procession from Mind, and that consequently Mind is competent for the comprehension of all things; and also that Mind is eternally one and the same;—we have no fear of antagonism between the perceptions of the present and those of the past, however remote that past be. Only, let it be remembered, the appeal is, in all cases, to perception, and in no case to prejudice or convention. In proceeding from God, all things proceed from pure Reason; and only by Reason which, in being unwarped by prejudice and unobscured by Matter, is pure, can anything be rightly apprehended.

24. Hence it is that the disposition which refers everything, for instance, to a book, and this perhaps one arbitrarily selected from among many similar books; or that refuses to accept truth save on the authority of miracle, is a superstitious disposition, and one that opposes as insuperable a barrier to knowledge as does the materialism—no less superstitious—which, constructing an hypothesis independently of facts, rejects all evidence which conflicts with its hypothesis. It is precisely a materialism such as this which, in the recoil from superstition of one kind, has plunged the age headlong into superstition of another kind. For the cultus of the present day—that of Matter—is the most stupendous example of Fetish-worship the world has ever seen. But of this we shall have more to say further

on. It is necessary here but to remind those who worship a book, that things are not true because they are in a Bible; but that they are in a Bible because previously recognised as true. And miracles—which are natural effects of exceptional causes—may indeed be proofs of occult power and skill, but are no evidences of the truth of any doctrine.

25. The following story from the Talmud will serve both to lighten our lecture and to illustrate our position in this respect.

"On a certain day, Rabbi Eliezer ben Orcanaz replied to the questions proposed to him concerning his teaching; but his arguments being found to be inferior to his pretensions, the doctors present refused to admit his conclusions. Then Rabbi Eliezer said: 'My doctrine is true, and this karoub-tree which is near us shall demonstrate the infallibility of my teaching.' Immediately the karoub-tree, obeying the voice of Eliezer, arose out of the ground and planted itself a hundred cubits farther off. But the Rabbis shook their heads and answered, 'The karoub-tree proves nothing.' 'What,' cried Eliezer, 'you resist so great a miracle? Then let this rivulet flow backwards, and attest the truth of my doctrine.' Immediately the rivulet, obeying the command of Eliezer, flowed backwards towards its source. But again the Rabbis shook their heads and said, 'The rivulet proves nothing. We must understand before we can believe.' 'Will you believe me,' said Rabbi Eliezer, 'if the walls of this house wherein we sit should fall down?' And the walls, obeying him, began to fall, until Rabbi Joshua exclaimed, 'By what right do the walls interfere in our debates?' Then the walls stopped in their fall out of respect to Rabbi Joshua, but remained leaning out of respect for Rabbi Eliezer, and remain leaning until this day. But

Eliezer, mad with rage, cried out: 'Then in order to confound you, and since you compel me to it, let a voice from heaven be heard!' And immediately the Bath-Kol, or Voice from heaven, was heard at a great height in the air, and it said, 'What are all the opinions of the Rabbis compared to the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer? When he has spoken, his opinion ought to prevail.' Hereupon Rabbi Joshua rose and said, 'It is written, "The law is not in heaven; it is in your mouth and in your heart." It is in your reason; for again it is written, "I have left you free to choose between life and death and good and evil." And it is in your conscience; for "if ye love the Lord and obey His voice within you, you will find happiness and truth." Wherefore then does Rabbi Eliezer bring in a karoub-tree, a rivulet, a wall, and a voice to settle questions of doctrine? And what is the only conclusion that can be drawn from such miracles, but that they who have expounded the laws of nature have not wholly understood them, and that we must now admit that in certain cases a tree can unroot itself, a rivulet flow backwards, walls obey instructions, and voices sound in the air? But what connection is there between these observations and the teaching of Rabbi Eliezer? No doubt these miracles were very extraordinary, and they have filled us with astonishment; but to amaze is not to argue, and it is argument, not phenomena, that we require. When, therefore, Rabbi Eliezer shall have proved to us that karoub-trees, rivulets, walls, and unknown voices afford us, by unusual manifestations, reasonings equal in value and weight to that reason which God has placed within us to guide our judgment, then alone will we make use of such testimonies and estimate them as Eliezer requires.'"

To the same purport the famous commentator, Maimon-

ides, says, "When thy senses affirm that which thy reason denies, reject the testimony of thy senses, and listen only to thy reason."

26. Having spoken of the Soul's functions, and of her relation to man, we come now to speak of her nature and history. Whether of the individual or of the universal, Soul is Substance, that which sub-stands all phenomena. This substance is original protoplasm; at once that which makes and that which becomes. The first manifestation of substance is in the interplanetary ether, called by Homer the "Middle Air," and known in the terminology of Occultism as the Astral Fluid. This, be it observed, is not soul, but that whereby soul is manifest, and in which it potentially subsists. Matter is the ultimate expression of substance, and represents that condition in which it is furthest removed from its original state, as the membranous capsule which forms the circumference of the physiologic cell represents the ultimate expression of the fluidic contents.

27. The Soul may be likened to the nucleus of the cell. The protoplasmic medium which is found within the capsular envelope and in which the nucleus floats, may be likened to the astral fluid, whether inter-planetary or inter-cellular. But the nucleus, the fluidic body surrounding it, and the exterior membrane, are all equally protoplasmic in nature, and the potentiality of one is in all; the difference actually observable among them being due only to difference of condition.

28. All the elements of the cell, however,—the nucleus included,—are material; whereas Matter itself is, whatever its kind, a mode of Substance, of which the nature is spiritual. But though Substance is, by its nature, Spirit, there is a sense in which Spirit is not Substance. This is

the sense in which Spirit denotes will or energy, as distinguished from the Substance in which this inheres. Under impulsion of the Spirit as thus defined, Substance exchanges its static for a dynamic condition, repose for activity, becoming molecularised, and therefore materialised, in the process. It does not, however, cease to be Substance by becoming Matter; but Matter ceases to be Matter by cessation of motion. Matter may thus be defined as Substance in a state of incessant, intense activity, which is the condition of every particle in the universe. From the microscopic molecule to the planet everything revolves, impelled by one force, and obeying one law.

29. The truth that Matter is Substance in its dynamic condition was well known to the hierophants of ancient India and Egypt, and finds expression in the Hebrew sacred books—which are Egyptian in origin—in the phrase,—"And on the seventh day, God rested from all His works, which God created and made."

This "resting"—which is not annihilation but repose—involves the return of Matter to its static condition of Substance. The idea presented is that of the cessation of active creative force, and the consequent return of phenomenal existence into essential being. This stage it is which constitutes the termination of the creative period, and the perfection of every creative work. It is at once the "rest which remains for the people of God;" the attainment of perfection by the individual, system, or race; and the return of the universe into the bosom of God, by re-absorption into the original substance. The Buddhist terms it *Nirvâna*; and the period of which it is the termination is called by the Hindûs *Kalpa*, a word signifying Form. And they hold that the universe undergoes a succession of Kalpas, being at the end of each re-absorbed into Deity, Who then rests

awhile prior to the next manifestation, reposing upon *Sesha*, the celestial "serpent," or living circle of Eternity, the symbol of essential Being, as opposed to *ex-istence* in its strict sense of manifested Being.

30. For, as will by and by be more fully shown, the substance of the soul, and therein of all things, and the substance of Deity, are one and the same; since there is but one Substance. And of this substance, the life is also called God, Who, as Living Substance, is at once Life and Substance, one and yet twain, or two in one. And that which is begotten of these two, and is, theologically, called the Son, and the Word, is necessarily the expression of both, and is, potentially, the Universe, for He creates it after His own Divine image by means of the Spirit He has received. Now the Divine Substance is, in its original condition, homogeneous. Every monad of it, therefore, possesses the potentialities of the whole. Of such a monad, in its original condition, every individual soul consists. And of the same substance, projected into lower conditions, the material universe consists. It undergoes, however, no radical change of nature through such projection; but its manifestation—on whatever plane occurring—is always as a Trinity in Unity, since that whereby substance becomes manifest, is the evolution of its Trinity. Thus—to reckon from without inwards, and below upwards—on the plane physical it is Force, universal Ether, and their offspring the material World. On the plane intellectual it is Life, Substance, and Formulation. On the plane spiritual—its original point of radiation—it is Will, Wisdom, and the Word. And on all planes whatsoever, it is, in some mode, Father, Mother, and Child. For "*there are Three which bear record in* '*heaven*,' or the invisible, *and these Three are One. And there are three which bear record on* '*earth*,' or

the visible, *and these three agree in one*, being Spirit, Soul and Body."[2]

31. The soul's entrance into Matter, and primal manifestation as an individual, occurs in the lowest modes of organic life, and is due to the convergence of the magnetic poles of the constituent molecules of some protoplasmic entity, an action due to the working of the Spirit in the Matter concerned. For all Matter, it must be remembered, has, and is, Spirit. The focussing of these poles gives rise to a circular magnetic current, of which the result is as an electric combustion, which is the vital spark, organic life, Soul. It is, however, no new creation in the ordinary sense of the term. For nothing can be either added to or withdrawn from the universe. It is but a *new condition* of the one substance already existing, a condition which constitutes a fresh act of individuation on the part of that substance. It has become, by self-generation, a soul or nucleus to the cell in which it has manifested itself. Such is the mode of operation of Substance, whether as manifested in the human soul or in the physiologic cell.

32. The doctrine of creation by development or evolution is a true doctrine, and is in no way inconsistent with the idea of divine operation; but the development is not of the original substance. Being infinite and eternal, that is perfect always. Development is of the manifestation of the qualities of that substance *in the individual*.

Development is intelligible only by the recognition of the inherent consciousness of the substance of existence. Of the qualities of that substance as manifested in the individual, Form is the expression. And it is because development is directed by conscious, experienced, and continually experiencing intelligence, which is ever seeking to eliminate

[2] See App. No. III.

the rudimentary and imperfect, that progression occurs in respect of Form. The highest product, man, is the result of the Spirit working intelligently within. But man attains his highest, and becomes perfect only through his own voluntary co-operation with the Spirit.

There is no mode of Matter in which the potentiality of personality, and therein of man, does not subsist. For every molecule is a mode of the universal consciousness. Without consciousness is no being. For consciousness *is* being.

33. The earliest manifestation of consciousness appears in the obedience paid to the laws of gravitation and chemical affinity, which constitute the basis of the later evolved organic laws of nutritive assimilation. And the perception, memory, and experience represented in man, are the accumulations of long ages of toil and thought, gradually advancing, through the development of the consciousness, from inorganic combinations upward to God. Such is the secret meaning of the old mystery-story which relates how Deucalion and Pyrrha, under the direction of Themis (Law), produced men and women from stones, and so peopled the renewed earth. These words of John the Baptist bear a similar signification:—"Verily I say unto you, that even of these stones God is able to raise up children unto Abraham." And by children of Abraham, are denoted that "spiritual Israel," the pure seekers after God, who finally attain and become one with the object of their quest.

34. As between Spirit and Matter, so between the organic and the inorganic there is no real barrier. Nature works in spirals, and works intelligently. In all that modern science has of truth, in respect of the doctrine of Evolution, it was anticipated thousands of years ago. But the scientists of old, using a faculty of the very existence of which those of the present day hear but to jeer at it, discerned in Soul

the agent, and in Mind the efficient cause, of all progress. They perceived, as all now perceive who only allow themselves to think, that were Matter, as ordinarily regarded, all that is, and blind force its impelling agent, no explanation would be possible of the obviously intelligent adaptation, everywhere apparent, of means to ends; the strong set of the current of life in the direction of beauty and goodness; and the differentiation of uses, functions, and kinds, not only in cellular tissues, but even in crystalline inorganic elements. Why should Matter, if only what ordinarily it is supposed, —unconscious, aimless, purposeless,—differentiate, diversify, develop? This is the question the ancients asked themselves; and they were keen enough to see that in their very ability to ask it, lay the solution of the problem. For the question was prompted by Mind, and the presence of Mind in the product man, involves its presence in the substance whereof man consists, seeing that an extract cannot contain that which is not in its original source.

35. The reasonableness of this proposition is, however, at length beginning once again to be recognised even in the prevailing school, by some of the more intelligent of its members; one of these having recently declared it necessary, in order to account for the facts of existence, to credit Matter with a "little feeling."[3] This is an admission, which, carried to its legitimate issue, involves the recognition of the system now under exposition. For it involves the recognition of God and the Soul. Thus is modern science, painfully and against its will, working back towards the great doctrine taught long ages ago in the lodges of the Indian and Egyptian Mysteries, and verified by the spiritual experience of every *epopt* who lived the life prescribed as the condition of illumination.

[3] The late Professor Clifford.

36. This is the doctrine known as that of the Transmigration of Souls. Of this doctrine the following concise description is taken from a translation dated 1650 of one of the so-called Hermetic books, which, emanating from Alexandria, and dating from pre-Christian or early Christian times, represent—at least in a measure—the esoteric doctrine of the Egyptian and other ancient religious systems. Of this body of writings only a few fragments survive. The passage cited is from book iv. of the work called *The Divine Pymander*, or Shepherd, of Hermes Trismegistus.

"*From one Soul of the Universe are all those Souls which in all the World are tossed up and down as it were, and severally divided. Of these Souls there are many Changes, some into a more fortunate Estate, and some quite contrary. And they which are of Creeping Things are changed into those of Watery Things, and those of Things Living in the Water to those of Things living on the Land; and Airy ones into Men; and Human Souls that lay hold of Immortality are changed into (holy) Demons. And so they go on into the Sphere of the Gods. . . . And this is the most perfect Glory of the Soul. But the Soul entering into the Body of a Man, if it continue evil, shall neither taste of Immortality nor be Partaker of the Good; but being drawn back the same Way, it returneth into Creeping Things. And this is the Condemnation of an evil Soul.*"

37. The doctrine of the Progression and Migration of Souls, and of the power of man, while still in the body, to recover the recollections of his soul, constituted the foundation of all those ancient religions out of which Christianity had its birth; and was therefore universally communicated to all initiates of the sacred mysteries. And, indeed, one of the special objects of the curriculum of these institutions, was to enable the candidate to recover the memory of his

previous incarnations, with a view to his total emancipation from the body. For the attainment of this power was regarded as a token that the final regeneration of the individual—when he would no longer have need of the body and its lessons—was well-nigh accomplished. Thus the prime object of the ancient lodges which constituted the pre-Christian Churches, was the culture of the soul as the divine and permanent element of the individual.

38. Various eminent sages are said to have remembered some at least of their previous incarnations; and notably Krishna, Pythagoras, Plato, Apollonius, and the Buddha Gautama. This last—the "Messenger" who fulfilled for the mystics of the East the part which six hundred years later was, for the mystics of the West, fulfilled by Jesus—is stated to have recovered the recollection of five hundred and fifty of his own incarnations. And the chief end of his doctrine is to induce men so to live as to shorten the number and duration of their earth-lives. "He," say the Hindû Scriptures, "who in his lifetime recovers the memory of all that his soul has learnt, is already a god."

Socrates also is represented as distinctly asserting the doctrine of re-incarnation; and it was implied, if not expressed, in the system formulated by the superb modern thinker and scientist, Leibnitz.

39. Following the Rabbins, and especially the Pharisees, Josephus asserted the return of Souls into new bodies. Nor are recognitions of the doctrine wanting in the Old and New Testaments. Thus the writer of the Book of Wisdom says of himself: "Being good, I came into a body undefiled." The prophets Daniel and John are told by their inspiring angels that they shall stand again on the earth in the last days of the Dispensation. And of John it was also intimated by Jesus that he should tarry within reach of the

earth-life, either for re-incarnation or metempsychosis when the appointed time should come. And of that great school which, apparently because it approached too near the truth to be safely tolerated by a materialising sacerdotalism, was denounced as the most dangerously heretical,—the school of the Gnostics,—the leader, Carpocrates, taught that the Founder of Christianity also was simply a person who, having a soul of great age and high degree of purity, had been enabled, through his mode of life, to recover the memory of its past. And Paul's description of him as a "Captain of Salvation made perfect through suffering," obviously implies a course of experience far in excess of any that is predicable of a single brief career.

To these instances must be added that of the question put to Jesus by his disciples respecting the blind man whom he had cured: "Did this man sin, or his parents, that he was born blind?" For it shows either that the belief in transmigration was a popular one among the Jews, or that Jesus had inculcated it in his disciples. His refusal to satisfy their curiosity is readily intelligible on the supposition that he was unwilling to disclose the affairs of other souls.

40. The opening chapters of the Book of Genesis imply the like doctrine. For they present creation as occurring through a gradual evolution from the lowest types upwards, —from gaseous elemental combinations to the crowning manifestation of humanity in woman,—and thus indicate the animal as ministering to the human in a sense widely differing from that ordinarily supposed; for they represent the animal as the younger self of the man, namely, as man rudimentary. All this is involved in the fact that the term applied to the genesis of living things below man, signifies *soul*,[4] and is so translated when applied to man; whereas

[4] Heb., *Nephesh*; *i.e.*, the lowest mode of soul.

when applied to beasts it is rendered "living creature." Thus, had the Bible been accurately translated, the doctrine that all creatures whatsoever represent incarnations, though in different conditions, of one and the same universal soul, would not now need to be re-declared, or when re-declared, would not be received with repugnance. That it does produce such a feeling, is a sign how far man has receded from a level once attained, at least in respect of his affectional nature. For the doctrine of a universal soul is the doctrine of love, in that it implies the recognition of the larger self. It represents, moreover, Humanity as the one universal creation of which all living things are but different steps either of development or of degradation, progression or retrogression, ascent or descent; that which determines the present condition and ultimate destiny of each individual entity, being its own will and affections. Animals appeared first on earth, not, as is vainly supposed, to minister to man's physical wants, but as an essential preliminary to humanity itself. On no other hypothesis is their existence intelligible for the long ages which elapsed before the appearance of man.

41. Thus, not only is the doctrine respectable for its antiquity, universality, and the quality and character of those who, on the strength of their own experience, have borne testimony to it; it is indispensable to any system of thought which postulates Justice as an essential element of Being. For it, and it alone of all methods ever suggested, solves the problem of the universe by resolving the otherwise insuperable difficulties which confront us in regard to the inequalities of earthly circumstance and relation.

The importance attached to it by the Egyptians is shown by the fact that they chose for their chief religious symbol an embodiment of it. For in representing the owest as

linked to the highest,—the loins of the creature of prey to the head and breast of the Woman,—the Sphinx denoted at once the unity, and the method of development, under individuation, of the soul of the universal humanity.

Part II.

42. We will now define more precisely the nature of the system we seek to restore, and its relation towards that so long in possession in the West. Although neither Christian nor Catholic in the accepted sense of these terms, it claims to be both Christian and Catholic in their original and true sense, and to be itself the lawful heir, whose inheritance has been usurped by a presentment altogether corrupt, false, superstitious, idolatrous.

According to the system recovered, the Christ Jesus, Redeemer, and Saviour, while equally its beginning, middle, and end, is not a mere historical personage, but, above and beyond this, a Spiritual Ideal and an Eternal Verity. Recognising fully that which Jesus was and did, it sets forth salvation as depending, not on what any man has said or done, but on what God perpetually reveals. For, according to it, Religion is not a thing of the past, or of any one age, but is an ever-present, ever-occurring actuality; for every man one and the same; a process complete in itself for each man; and for him subsisting irrespective of any other man whatsoever. It thus recognises as the actors in the momentous drama of the soul two persons only, the individual himself and God. And whereas in it alone is to be found a complete and reasonable exposition of the parts assigned to both in the work of salvation, all competing systems must be regarded as but an aspiration towards or a degeneration from it, and as true only in so far as they accord with it.

43. And here it may be remarked, that the doctrine of religion as a present reality, needing no historic basis, is one which in this age ought to find special welcome. For, what now is the condition of men's minds in respect to the *historical* element of the existing religion? None but those who through lack of education stand necessarily upon the old ways, have any reliance upon it. Critical analysis—that function of the mind which, in its nature destructive, is, nevertheless, really harmful only to that which, in being untrue, has not in itself the element of perpetuity—has laid an unsparing axe to the forest of ancient tradition. The science of Biblical exegesis has made it obvious to every percipient mind that sacred books, so far from being infallible records of actual events, abound with inaccuracies, contradictions, and interpolations; that sacred persons, if they existed at all, had histories differing widely from those narrated of them; that sacred events could not have occurred in the manner stated; and that sacred doctrines are, for the most part, either intrinsically absurd, or common to systems yet more ancient, whose claims to sanctity are denied.

44. Thus, to take the leading items of Christian belief, —the whole story of the Incarnation, the expectation of the Messiah, the announcement by the angel, the conception by the Virgin, the birth at midnight in a cave, the name of the immaculate mother, the appearance to shepherds of the celestial host, the visit of the Magi, the flight from the persecuting Herod, the slaughter of the innocents, the finding of the divine boy in the temple, the baptism, the fasting and trial in the wilderness, the conversion of the water into wine, and other like marvels, the triumphal entry into the holy city, the passion, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension, and much of the teach-

ing ascribed to the Saviour,—all these are variously attributed also to Osiris, Mithras, Iacchos, Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, and others, at dates long antecedent to the Christian era. And monuments and sculptures still exist, showing that the entire story of the Divine Man of the Gospels was, long before Moses, taught to communicants and celebrated in sacraments in numberless colleges of sacred mysteries.[5]

45. The Fathers of the Church—who were well aware of these facts—dealt with them variously according to the tone and resources of their individual minds. Many of the most notable, including St. Augustine, saw the truth in its proper light; but the explanation accepted was, that the Devil, foreknowing the counsel and intention of God, had maliciously forestalled the career of the true Messiah by false semblances, causing it to be enacted in anticipation by a number of spurious messiahs, so that when the world's true redeemer should appear, he might be lost, as it were, in the crowd of his predecessors, and shorn of all particular glory.

46. And what, it may be asked, of the personage just mentioned, who plays so enormous a part in the orthodox presentment? He, too, is a perversion of a truth, the real meaning of which will by and by be exhibited. It is sufficient to remark here, that, in being founded—as by the current corrupt orthodoxy—on the conception of a personal and, virtually, a *divine* principle of evil, Christianity is made to rest upon an hypothesis altogether monstrous and impossible.

47. There is neither space nor need to particularise the

[5] For a comparative list of some "pre-Christian data" which were "Christianised in the Canonical Gospels and the Book of Revelation," see *Ancient Egypt*, by Gerald Massey (1907), vol. ii., pp. 907–914.

strictures to which the Bible, throughout, is fairly open alike on grounds historical, moral, and scientific; or to speak of the many ecclesiastical Councils which, from century to century, have dealt with its component books, variously affirming or denying their canonicity; or to point out the innumerable contradictions and inconsistencies, of doctrine and of narrative, with which it abounds. These things, already familiar to many, are readily verifiable by all. This only must be insisted on;—to be a student of religion, to be a theologian in the true sense, it is necessary to have knowledge, not of one religion only, but of all religions, not of one sacred book only, but of all sacred books; and to deal with all as with the one, and with the one as with all; to handle the Vedas, the Bhagavad-Gîtâ, the Lalita-Vistara, the Zend-Avesta, and the Kabbala with the same reverence as the Old and New Testaments; and to apply to these the same critical touch-stone as to those. It is truth alone which is valuable, and this fears nothing. The crucible does not hurt the gold. The dross alone falls away under the test; and of the dross we are surely well rid.

48. And when all this has been done; when the mind, purified from prejudice and disciplined by experience, has become an instrument of knowledge competent for the discernment of truth, what, it will be asked, remains to man of his faith and hope, his God and his soul? We know the reply of the Materialist. He, as has been wittily said, throws away the child with the water in which it has been washed. Because he finds impurity obstructing the truth, he rejects the truth together with the impurity. That which remains is the real, ever-living religion; a Divine and operating Word, and not a testament of the dead; a God and a Soul who, as Parent and Offspring, are able to

come into direct and palpable relations with each other. And the Creation, the Fall, the Redemption, and the Ascension—rescued from the tomb of the past—become living and eternal verities, enacted by every child of God in his own soul; and Inspiration once more lifts its voice and is heard among us as truly as of old.

49. For those, then, who, being indeed of Christ, as well as called by his name, know by personal experience that "the kingdom of heaven is within," there is no cause for anxiety as to the issue of any investigation, critical, scientific, or historical, how keen and unsparing soever. For they know that Religion—which is the Science of Life Eternal—appeals, not to the bodily senses, but to the soul, since no mere physical phenomena can have any relation to spiritual needs. They know, too, that in representing absolute, eternal verities, religious ideas are beyond the reach of any power of earth to erase or destroy them. But they who, on the contrary, have staked their all of faith in God and hope in heaven upon the special events of a particular period and place, have indeed ground for dismay and despair when they behold in the sculptured remains of other places and remoter times, the effigies of the like events,—the crucifixion of Mithras, the infant Horus or Krishna in the arms of an immaculate mother, the resurrection of Osiris, and the ascension of Heracles. For they see in these, the invalidation, or at least the perplexing multiplication, of events which, on their hypothesis, ought to have happened but once in the world's—nay, in the universe's—whole history, and on the correct reporting of which their eternal welfare depends. The actual value of these facts will appear as we proceed. They are cited here in demonstration of the fallacy involved in the conception of religion as a thing dependent on history. Rightly interpreted, they

will show that the Soul has no relation to phenomena, and that "the kingdom of Christ is not of this world."

50. The Gospels bear evidence of being compiled or adapted in great measure from older Oriental Scriptures. But whether or not the events related happened only in part or not at all; whether they were put into their present form by Alexandrian Epopts some hundred years after the date assigned in them to the events they record; or whether their central figure, being himself an Initiate and Adept in the religious science of Egypt and India, actually rehearsed in his own person the greater part of the sacred mysteries, —is, happily, but of secondary importance. And even were it otherwise, it is obvious that the further we get away from the period of the events relied on, and the more years multiply upon us, thrusting that past into still remoter times and ever deepening shades of antiquity, the more difficult must the task of verification become, and the weaker the influences thence exerted upon man's moral and intellectual nature. Alas for the hopes of the generations yet to be born, if an historical Christianity be indeed essential to salvation! Nor can we be blind to the injustice and cruelty of making salvation dependent upon belief in occurrences concerning which only a learned few can at any time be in a position to judge whether or not they ever took place; and these, moreover, occurrences of a nature to be *a priori* incredible save to an elect few. Assuredly, if any demonstration be needed of the necessary unsoundness of a system which rests upon history, it is to be found in the present condition of Christianity. Declining to entrust its doctrine to Reason, the Church has taken its stand upon historical evidence, only to find this give way under it; and it is now without any basis save that of Custom. The time has come in which Christians are Christians, only

because they are accustomed to be Christians. Habit has superseded conviction.

51. Very different is the relation between the human mind and the system under exposition. Appealing to the understanding, and condemning as superstition the faith which is not also knowledge, this system meets unshaken the tests alike of time and of reason; and, so far from looking coldly on science, hails it as an indispensable ally, stipulating only that it be science, and not that which is "falsely so called." Hoping everything and fearing nothing from the light of reason, it welcomes the searching ray into every recess, and greets with eager hands the philosopher, the historian, the critic, the philologist, the mathematician, the classic, the physicist, and the occultist. For its appeal is to intelligence as developed by knowledge, in the absolute assurance that where these exist in the greatest plenitude, there it will gain the fullest recognition.

52. And the intelligence appealed to is not of the head only, but is also of the heart; of the moral conscience as well as of the intellect. Insisting upon the essential unity of all being, it admits of no antagonism between the human and the Divine. But holding that the human *is* the Divine, and that that which is not Divine is sub-human, it seeks, by the demonstration of the perfection of God, to enable man to perfect himself after the image of God. And it claims, moreover, to be the one philosophy wherein that image finds intelligent exposition, and whereby it obtains practical recognition. To the question why, being in all respects so admirable, it has become lost or perverted, the answer involves the history of man's original Fall, and will in due course appear.

53. There are two or three classes of objectors, to whom

reply will now be made in anticipation. Of these classes one is that which, under the influence of the prevailing Materialism, holds, that so far from the phrase just employed, "Image of God," having any basis in reality, modern science has practically demonstrated the non-existence of God. If the following reply to this class involves a reference to regions of being as yet unrecognised in their own science, it is not upon us that the responsibility for the limitation rests. We speak of that which we know, having learned it by experience.

54.[6] A true Idea is the reflect of a true Substance. It is because religious ideas are true ideas that they are common to all ages and peoples; the differences being of expression merely, and due to the variation of density and character of the magnetic atmosphere through which the image passes. The fact that every nation in every age has conceived, in some shape, of the Gods, constitutes of itself a proof that the Gods really *are*. For Nothing projects no image upon the magnetic light; and where an image is universally perceived, there is certainly an object which projects it. An Idea, inborn, ineradicable, constant, which sophism, ridicule, or false science has power to break only, but not to dispel:—an image which, however disturbed, invariably returns on itself and re-forms as does the image of the sky or the stars in a lake, however the reflecting water may be momentarily shaken by a stone or a passing vessel:—such an image as this is necessarily the reflection of a real and true thing, and no illusion begotten of the water itself.

In the same manner the constant Idea of the Gods, persistent in all minds in all ages, is a true image; for it

[6] This paragraph was taken down by Edward Maitland as spoken by Anna Kingsford under Illumination (*Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., p. 32).

is verily, and in no metaphoric sense, the projection upon the human perception of the *Eidola* of the Divine persons. The *Eidolon* is the reflection of a true object in the magnetic atmosphere; and the magnetic atmosphere is a transparent medium, through which the soul receives sensations. For sensation is the only means of knowledge, whether for the body or for the reason. The body perceives by means of the five avenues of touch. The soul perceives in like manner by the same sense, but of a finer sort and put into action by subtler agents. The soul can know nothing not perceptible; and nothing not perceptible is real. For that which is not can give no image. Only that which *is* can be reflected.

55. To the other classes of objectors, who are chiefly of the religious and orthodox order, the following considerations are addressed.

a. The apparently new is not necessarily the really new; but may be a recovery—providential, timely, and precious—of the old and original which has been forgotten, perverted, or suppressed.

b. So far from it being incumbent on Christians to accept the established in religion as necessarily the true and the right, the condemnation by the later Hebrew prophets of the established form of Judaism, as no longer in their time representing the religion divinely given through Moses, imposes on Christians the duty of exercising, at the least, hesitation before accepting the established form of Christianity as faithfully representing the religion divinely given through Jesus. Christendom has been exposed for a far longer period than was Israel, to influences identical with those which caused the deterioration denounced by the prophets, namely, the abandonment of religion, without prophetic guidance or correction, to a control exclusively

sacerdotal, and therein to Tradition uninterpreted by Intuition. And not only so, but on the first formal definition and establishment of Christianity under Constantine,—himself an ardent votary of a sun-worship become grossly materialistic,—the dominant conception was far more in accordance with the principles of sacerdotalism than with those of its Founder. There remains, also, the strong *a priori* improbability that a system identical with that which, in consequence of the efforts of Jesus to purify it, became his destroyer,—a system exclusively sacerdotal and traditional,—should, even though calling itself Christian, prove a trusty guardian and faithful expositor of his doctrine.

c. The belief that Christianity was indeed divinely intended and adapted to effect the redemption of the world from engrossment by the elements merely material of existence, to the recognition and appreciation of its spiritual and true substance; and the fact that thus far Christianity has signally failed to accomplish that object,—make it in the highest degree obligatory on Christians, both to seek diligently the cause of such failure, and to seek it elsewhere than in an original defect of the religion itself.

d. According to numerous indications—including the express declarations of Jesus himself — much that is essential to the proper comprehension and practical application of Christian doctrine, was reserved for future disclosure. History has yet to record the full manifestation of that "Spirit of Truth," who was to testify of Jesus, and lead his followers into all truth. And the world has still to see the Christ-ideal so "lifted up" and exhibited as, by force of its perfection as a system of life and thought, irresistibly to "draw all men" to it.

e. In point alike of character and of time, the present period coincides with that indicated in numerous pro-

phecies, as appointed for the close of the old and the commencement of a new era. This is necessarily an event which can come about only through some radical change in the course of the world's thought. For, in being, however unconsciously to itself, a product of Mind, the world always follows its thought. The world has now followed its thought in the direction of Matter and blind force, until, for the first time in man's history, its recognised intellect has, almost with one consent, pronounced decidedly against the idea of God. This, therefore, is no other than that "time of the end" whereof the token should be the exaltation of Matter instead of Spirit, and the obtrusion into the "holy place" of God and the soul, of the "abomination that maketh desolate," to the utter extinction of the world's spiritual life and of the idea of a divine Humanity. Now is "that wicked one" and "man of sin"—that is, humanity deliberately self-made in the image of the Not-God—definitively revealed; and the gospel of Love is confessedly replaced by the gospel of Force.[7] Of the prophecies, moreover, which referred to the period in question, it was declared that the words should be "closed up and sealed till the time of the end." The very discovery of the true interpretation of the mystical Scriptures, would therefore constitute an indication that the "end is at hand."

f. If it be, indeed, that man is not to "go down quick into the pit" that he has dug for himself, the emergency is one with which religion alone can grapple. But, so far from the religion already in the world being competent for the task, it has, by reason of its own degeneracy, ministered

[7] It is not a little remarkable, that the foremost symbol of this new gospel should have for name the Greek term for force; *dynamite* being simply δύναμις.

to the evil. Wherefore only by a religion which is not that now in vogue, can man be saved. Time alone, of course, can determine if, or by what means, the needed redemption will be wrought. Enough has been said to show that, from the religious point of view, there is ample reason in favour of according a serious hearing even to doctrines and claims so strange and unfamiliar to most persons as those herein advanced.

56. Finally, to close this Introductory Lecture, and to reassure those who, desirous to know more, are yet apprehensive of finding themselves in the issue, like the patriarch of old, robbed of their gods, we add this final reflection:—The end in view is not denial, but interpretation; not destruction, but reconstruction, and this with the very materials hitherto in use. No names, personages, or doctrines now regarded as divine will be rejected or defamed. And even though the indubitable fact be recognised, that the "one name given under heaven whereby men can be saved" has been shared by many, that name will still be the name of salvation, and the symbol of its triumph will still be the cross of Jesus, even though borne before him by, or in the name of, an Osiris, a Mithras, a Krishna, a Dionysos, or a Buddha, or any others who, overcoming by love the limitations of Matter, have been faithful to the death mystically called the death of the cross, and, attaining thereby the crown of eternal life for themselves, have shown to men the way of salvation.

Instead, then, of indulging apprehension on the score indicated, let heed rather be given to the true moral of the story of all the Christs, how many soever they be, by whom is enacted in its fulness, while yet in the body, the divine drama of the soul. For, with Christ, all may, in their degree, be redeemers alike of themselves and of others; and

with him, to redeem, they must themselves first love and suffer and die. For, as said the German mystic, Scheffler, two centuries ago,—

> "Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
> But not within thyself, thy soul will be forlorn:
> The cross of Golgotha thou lookest to in vain,
> Unless within thyself it be set up again."

LECTURE THE SECOND.[1]

THE SOUL; AND THE SUBSTANCE OF EXISTENCE.

PART I.

1. OUR theme is that which is at once the supreme subject and object of culture, and the necessary basis of all real religion and science. For it is the substance of existence, the Soul, universal and individual, of humanity. Only when we know the nature of this, can we know what we ourselves are, and what we have it in us to become. For our potentialities necessarily depend upon the substance whereof we are made.

2. This is not Matter. Wherefore a science which, in being restricted to the cognition of phenomena, is a materialistic science, cannot help us to an understanding of ourselves. But, on the contrary, to such understanding such science is, in its issues, the greatest enemy. Matter is not God; and in order to understand ourselves, it is necessary to understand God. God is the Substance of existence. Be that substance what it may, it still is God; and of God no other definition is possible or desirable, but all conditions are satisfied by it. To know God, then, is to know this substance; and to know this, is to know ourselves, and only by knowing this can we know ourselves.

[1] This lecture was written by Edward Maitland mainly from Illuminations received by Anna Kingsford: and was delivered by him on Monday the 23rd May, 1881 (*Life of A. K.*, vol. ii., pp. 16, 17, 32).

3. Such, and no other or less, was the meaning of the famous mystic utterance inscribed on the temple porch at Delphi,—*Know thyself*,—a sentence which, notwithstanding its brevity, comprehends all wisdom. An attempt, it is true, has been made to improve upon it in the saying,—*Ignore thyself, and learn to know thy God.* But that which is intended in the latter, is, albeit unsuspected by its framer, comprised in the former. For, as is known to the Mystic—or student of Substance—such is the constitution of the universe, that man cannot know himself without knowing God, and cannot know God without knowing himself. And as, moreover, only through the knowledge of the one can the knowledge of the other be attained, so the knowledge of the one implies and involves that of the other. For, as the Mystic knows, there is but one substance alike of man and of God.

4. This substance, we repeat, is not Matter; and a science which recognises Matter only, so far from ministering towards the desired comprehension of ourselves, is the deadly foe of such comprehension. For, as Matter is, in the sense already described, the antithesis of Spirit, so is Materialism the antithesis of the system under exposition, namely, of Mysticism, or, as we propose to call it, Spiritualism. And here it must be understood that we use this latter term, not in its modern debased and limited sense, but in its ancient proper purity and plenitude, that wherein it signifies the science, not of *spirits* merely, but of Spirit, that is, of God, and therein of all Being. Thus adopting and rehabilitating the term Spiritualism, we define as follows:—first, the system we have recovered and seek to establish; and, next, the system we condemn and seek to destroy.

5. Dealing with both substance and phenomenon, Spirit

and Matter, the eternal and the temporal, the universal and the individual; constituting respecting existence a complete system of positive doctrine beyond which neither mind nor heart can aspire; providing a rule of knowledge, of understanding, of faith, and of conduct; derived from God's own Self; transmitted and declared by the loftiest intelligences in the worlds human and celestial; and in every respect confirmed by the reason, the intuition, and the experience of the earth's representative men, its sages, saints, seers, prophets, redeemers, and Christs, and by none in any respect confuted;—the system comprised under the term Spiritualism is not only at once a science, a philosophy, a morality, and a religion, but is the science, the philosophy, the morality, and the religion of which all others are, either by aspiration or by degeneration, limitations merely. And according to the degree of its acceptance by man, it ministers to his perfection and satisfaction here and hereafter.

6. But its antithesis:—Springing from the bottomless pit of man's lower nature; having for its criterion, not the conclusions of the mind or the experiences of the soul, but only the sensations of the body; and being, therefore, not a science, nor a philosophy, nor a morality, nor a religion, but the opposite of each and all of these,—the system comprised under the term Materialism is not a limitation of Spiritualism but is the negation of it, and is to it what darkness is to light, nonentity to existence, the "devil" to God. And in proportion to the degree of its acceptance by man, it ministers to his deterioration and destruction here and hereafter.

7. Between the two extremes thus presented, having liberty to choose, and power to determine his own destination, man, according to mystical doctrine, is placed, in pursuance of the Divine Idea, of which creation is the mani-

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festation. And whereas, in implying the culture of the substantial, Spiritualism, as we use the term, represents Reality; and in implying the culture of the phenomenal only, Materialism represents Illusion, the choice between them is the choice between the Perfection and the Negation of Being.

8. But whatever the quarrel of the Spiritualist with Materialism for its exclusive recognition of Matter, and consequent idolatry of form and appearance, with Matter itself he has no quarrel. For, although, by reason of its limitations, the cause of evil, Matter is not in itself evil. On the contrary, it comes forth from God, and consists of that whereof God's Self consists, namely, Spirit. It *is* Spirit, by the force of the Divine will subjected to conditions and limitations, and made exteriorly cognisable.

9. Matter is thus a manifestation of that which in its original condition is unmanifest, namely, Spirit. And Spirit does not become evil by becoming manifest. Evil is the result of the limitation of Spirit by Matter. For Spirit is God, and God is good. Wherefore, in being the limitation of God, Matter is the limitation of good. Such limitation is essential to creation. For without a projection of Divine Substance, that is, of God's Self, into conditions and limitations,—of Being, which is absolute, into Existence, which is relative,—God would remain inoperative, solitary, unmanifest, and consequently unknown, unhonoured, and unloved, with all God's power and goodness potential merely and unexercised. For aught else to exist than God, there must be that which is, by limitation, inferior to God. And for this to exist in plenitude corresponding to God's infinitude, it must involve the idea of the opposite and negation of God. This is to say:—Creation, to be worthy of God, must involve the idea of a No-God. God's absolute plenitude in

respect of all the qualities and properties which constitute Being, must be contrasted by that utter deprivation of all such properties and qualities, which constitutes Not-being. Between no narrower extremes can a Divine creation be contained. By no lesser contrast can God be fully manifested. The darkness of God's shadow must correspond in intensity with the brightness of God's light. And only through the full knowledge of the one, can the other be duly apprehended and appreciated. He only can thoroughly appreciate good who has ample knowledge of evil. It is a profound truth, that "the greater the sinner, the greater the saint." That exquisite epitome of the Soul's history, the parable of the Prodigal Son, is based upon the same text. Only they who have gone out from God, returning, know God. At once consequence and cause of the going out from God, Matter is an indispensable minister to Creation, without which and its limitations Creation were not.

10. But mere Creation does not represent the totality of the Divine purpose. And a creation restricted to the actualities of Matter would be the reverse of a boon to itself or a credit to God. For by a creation thus limited, Deity would have shown Itself to be that only which the Materialist imagines It, namely, Force. Whereas "God is Love." And Love is that, not which merely creates and after brief caress repudiates and discards; but which sustains, redeems, perfects, and perpetuates. And to these ends Matter ministers indispensably, and therein contributes towards that second creation which is the supplement and complement of the first. This second creation is called *Redemption*, and in it the Creator finds His recognition and glorification, and man his perfection and perpetuation. For Redemption is the full compensation, both to God and to the universe, for

all that is undergone and suffered by and through Creation. And it is brought about by the return from Matter of Spirit, to its original condition of purity, but individuated and enriched by the resuits of all that has been gained through the processes to which it has been subjected;—results which, but for Matter, could not have been. Matter is thus indispensable to the processes both of creation and of perfection. For that through which we are made perfect is experience, or suffering; and we are only really alive and exist in so far as we have felt. Now, of this divine and indispensable ministry of experience, Matter is the agent.

11. Such being for the Spiritualist, who also is Mystic and not Phenomenalist merely, the origin, nature, and final cause of Matter, he has with it no ground of quarrel. But recognising it as intended not to conceal but to reveal God, and to minister to man's creation in the image of God, he regards the material universe as a divine revelation, and seeks, by humble, reverent, and loving analysis of it, to learn both it and God, and thus to make it minister to his own perfection. "Imitation," it has been said, and truly, "is the sincerest flattery." And man best honours God when he seeks to be like God. In this pursuit it is that, following his intuition of Spirit, he ascends from the exterior sphere of Matter and appearance—that sphele which, as the outermost of man's system, constitutes the border-land between him and negation, and is therefore next neighbour to that which, mystically, is called the *devil*—to the interior sphere of Spirit and Reality, where God subsists in His plenitude. And so, from Nature's Seeming he attains to the cognition at once of God's and his own Being.

12. The system by the knowledge and observance of

which these supreme ends are attained, and which is now for the first time in the world's history openly disclosed, has constituted the hidden basis of all the world's divine revelations and religions. For from the beginning there has been one divine Revelation, constantly re-revealed in whole or in part, and representing the actual eternal nature of existence; and this in such measure as to enable those who receive it to make of their own existence the highest and best that can possibly be imagined or desired. Known by various names, delivered at various places and periods, and finding expression under various symbols, this revelation has constituted a Gospel of Salvation for all who have accepted it, enabling them to escape the limitations of Matter and return to the condition of pure Spirit, and therein to attain immunity, not merely, as is ordinarily desired, from the consequences of sin, but from the liability to sin. And, as history shows, wherever it has succeeded in obtaining full manifestation, Materialism, with all its foul brood, has fled discomfited, like Python, the mighty Serpent of Darkness, before the darts of Phoibos, to make its dwelling in the caverns and secret places of earth.

Part II.

13. Coming, then, to the proper subject of this Lecture, we will now treat of the Soul, universal and individual, commencing with the latter.

The soul, or permanent element in man, is first engendered in the lowest forms of organic life, from which it works upwards, through plants and animals, to man. Its earliest manifestation is in the ethereal or fluidic material called the astral body; and it is not something added to that body, but is generated in it by the polarisation of the elements. Once generated, it enters into and passes

through many bodies, and continues to do so until finally perfected or finally dissipated and lost. The process of its generation is gradual. The magnetic forces of innumerable elements are directed and focused to one centre; and streams of electric power pass along all their convergent poles to that centre, until they create there a fire, a kind of crystallisation of magnetic force. This is the Soul, the sacred fire of the hearth, called by the Greeks Hestia, or Vesta, which must be kept burning continually. The astral and fluidic body, its immediate matrix,—called also the *perisoul*,—and the material or fixed body put forth by this, may fall away and disappear; but the soul, once begotten and made an individual, is immortal, until its own perverse will extinguishes it. For the fire of the soul must be kept alive by the Divine Breath, if it is to endure for ever. It must converge, not diverge. If it diverge, it will be dissipated. The end of progress is unity; the end of degradation is division. The soul, therefore, which ascends, tends more and more to union with and absorption into the Divine.

14. The clearest understanding may be obtained of the soul by defining it as the Divine Idea. Before anything can exist outwardly and materially, the idea of it must subsist in the Divine Mind. The soul, therefore, may be understood to be divine and everlasting in its nature. But it does not act directly upon Matter. It is put forth by the Divine Mind; but the body is put forth by the astral, or "fiery," body. As Spirit, on the celestial plane, is the parent of the soul, so Fire, on the material plane, begets the body. The plane on which the celestials and creatures touch each other, is the astral plane.

15. The soul, being in its nature eternal, passes from one form to another until, in its highest stage, it polarises suf-

ficiently to receive the spirit. It is in all organised things. Nothing of an organic nature exists without a soul. It is the *individual*, and perishes finally if uninformed of the spirit.

16. This becomes readily intelligible if we conceive of God as of a vast spiritual body constituted of many individual elements, all having but one will and therefore being one. This condition of oneness with the Divine Will and Being, constitutes what, in Hindû mysticism, is called the celestial Nirvâna. But though becoming pure Spirit, or God, the individual retains his individuality. So that, instead of all being finally merged in the One, the One becomes Many. Thus does God become millions. "God is multitudes, and nations, and kingdoms, and tongues; and the sound of God is as the sound of many waters."

17. The Celestial Substance is continually individualising Itself, that It may build Itself up into One perfect Individual. Thus is the Circle of Life accomplished, and thus its ends meet the one with the other. But the degraded soul, on the other hand, must be conceived of as dividing more and more, until, at length, it is scattered into many, and ceases to be as an individual, becoming, as it were, split, and broken up, and dispersed into many pieces. This is the Nirvâna of annihilation.[2]

18. The Planet must not be looked upon as something apart from its offspring. It, also, is a Person, fourfold in nature, and having four orders of offspring, of which orders man alone comprises the whole. Of its offspring some lie in the astral region only, and are but twofold; some in the watery region, and are threefold; and some in the human region, who are fourfold. The metallic and magnetic envelopes of the planet are its body and perisoul. The

[2] See *C. W. S.*, part ii., No. iv., p. 221.

organic region comprises its soul; and the human region its spirit, or divine part. When it was but metallic it had no individualised soul. When it was but organic it had no divine spirit. But when man was made in the image of God, then was its spirit breathed into its soul. In the metallic region soul is diffused and unpolarised; and the metals, therefore, are not individual; and not being individual, their transmutation does not involve transmigration. But the plants and animals are individual, and their essential element transmigrates and progresses. And man has also a divine spirit; and so long as he is man—that is, truly human—he cannot redescend into the body of an animal or any creature in the sphere beneath him, since that would be an indignity to the spirit. But if he lose his spirit, and become again animal, he may descend, and —disintegrating— become altogether gross and horrible. This is the end of persistently evil men. For God is not the God of creeping things; but Impurity—personified by the Hebrews as Baalzebub—is their god. And there were none of these in the Age of Gold, neither shall there be any when the earth is fully purged. Man's own wickedness is the creator of his evil beasts.[3]

19. The soul is not astral fluid, but is manifest by astral fluid. For the soul itself is, like the idea, invisible and intangible. This may be best seen by following out the genesis of any particular action. For instance, the stroke of the pen on paper is the phenomenon, that is, the outer body. The action which produces the stroke, is the astral body; and, though physical, it is not a thing, but a transition or medium between the result and its cause,—between, that is, the stroke and the idea. The idea, manifested in the act, is not physical, but mental, and is the soul of the

[3] Comp. *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, l. xvi.

act. But even this is not the first cause. For the idea is put forth by the will, and this is the spirit. Thus, we will an idea, as God wills the Macrocosm. The potential body, its immediate result, is the astral body; and the phenomenal body, or ultimate form, is the effect of motion and heat. If we could arrest motion, we should have as the result, fire. But fire itself also is material, since, like the earth or body, it is visible to the outer sense. It has, however, many degrees of subtlety. The astral, or *odic*, substance, therefore, is not the soul itself, but is the medium or manifestor of the soul, as the act is of the idea.

20. To pursue this explanation a little further. The act is a *condition* of the idea, in the same way as fire, or incandescence, is the condition of any given object. Fire is, then, the representative of that transitional medium termed the Astral body; as Water—the result of the combined interaction of Wisdom the Mother, or Oxygen, and Justice the Father, or Hydrogen—is of the Soul. Air, which is produced by the mixture—not combination—of Wisdom and Force (Azoth), represents the Spirit—One in operation, but ever Twain in constitution. Earth is not, properly speaking, an element at all. She is the result of the Water and the Air, fused and crystallised by the action of the Fire; and her rocks and strata are either aqueous or igneous. Fire, the real maker of the body, is, as we have seen, a mode and condition, and not a true element. The only real, true, and permanent elements, therefore, are Air and Water, which are respectively, as Spirit and Soul, Will and Idea, Father and Mother. And out of these are made all the elements of earth by the aid of the *condition* of Matter, which is, interchangeably, Heat and Motion. Wisdom, Justice, and Force, or Oxygen, Hydrogen, and Azoth, are the three out of which the two true elements are produced.

21. Material body, astral fluid or sideral body, soul, and spirit, all these are one in their essence. And the first three are differentialities of polarisation. The fourth is God's Self. When the Gods—the Elohim or Powers of the Hebrews—put forth the world, they put forth substance with its three potentialities, but all in the condition of "odic" light. This substantial light is called sometimes the sideral or astral body, sometimes the perisoul, and this because it is both. It is that which makes, and that which becomes. It is fire, or the *anima bruta* (as distinguished from the Divine), out of and by means of which body and soul are generated. It is the fiery manifestation of the soul, the magnetic factor of the body. It is space, it is substance, it is foundation; so that from it proceed the gases and the minerals, which are unindividuated, and from it also the organic world which is individuated. But man it could not make; for man is fourfold, and of the divine ether, the province assigned by the Greeks to Zeus, the father of Gods and men.

22. The outer envelope of the macrocosm and the microcosm alike, the Earth or body, is thus in reality not elemental at all, but is a compound of the other three elements. Its fertility is due to the water, and its transmutory or chemical power to the fire. The water corresponds to the soul,—the "best principle" of Pindar,—while fire is to the body what spirit is to the soul. As the soul is without divinity and life until vivified by the spirit, so the body—earth or Matter—is without physical life in the absence of fire. No Matter is really dead Matter, for the fire element is in all Matter. But Matter would be dead, would cease, that is, to exist as Matter, if motion were suspended, which is, if there were no fire. For, as wherever there is motion there is heat, and consequently fire, and motion is the

condition of Matter; so without fire would be no Matter. In other words, Matter is a *mode* of life.

Part III.

23. We come now to the history and progress of the soul. Souls, we have said, work upwards from plants and animals to man. In man they attain their perfection and the power to dispense altogether with material bodies. Their ability to do this is the cause and consequence of their perfection. And it is the attainment of this that is the object of the culture of the soul—the object, that is, of religion. Spirit alone is good, is God. Matter is that whereby spirit is limited, and is, therein, the cause of evil; for evil is the limitation of good. Wherefore to escape from Matter and its limitations, and return to the condition of spirit, is to be superior to the liability to evil.

24. Formerly the way of escape for human souls was more open than now, and the path clearer. Because, although ignorance of intellectual things abounded, especially among the poorer folk, yet the knowledge of divine things, and the light of faith, were stronger and purer. The *anima bruta*, or earthly mind, was less strongly defined and fixed, so that the *anima divina*, or heavenly mind, subsisted in more open conditions. Wherefore the souls of those ages of the world, not being enchained to earth as they now are, were enabled to pass more quickly through their avatârs; and but few incarnations sufficed where now many are necessary. For in these days the mind's ignorance is weighted by materialism, instead of being lightened by faith; and the soul is sunk to earth by love of the body, by atheism, and by excessive care for the things of sense. And being crushed thereby, it lingers long in the atmosphere of earth, seeking many fresh lodgments, and so multiplies

bodies, the circumstances of each of which are influenced by the use made of the previous one.

25. For every man makes his own fate, and nothing is truer than that Character is Destiny. It is by their own hands that the lines of some are cast in pleasant places, of some in vicious, and of some in virtuous ones, so that there is nothing arbitrary or unjust. But in what manner soever a soul conduct itself in one incarnation, by that conduct, by that order of thought and habit, it builds for itself its destiny in a future incarnation. For the soul is enchained by these pre-natal influences, which irresistibly force it into a new nativity at the time of such conjunction of planets and signs as oblige it into certain courses and incline it strongly thereto. But if the soul oppose itself to these influences and adopt some other course,—as it well may to its own real advantage,—it brings itself under a "curse" for such period as the planets and ruling signs of that incarnation have power. But though this means misfortune in a worldly sense, it is true fortune for the soul in a spiritual sense. For the soul is therein striving to atone and make restitution for the evil done in its own past; and thus striving, it advances towards higher and happier conditions. Wherefore man is, strictly, his own creator, in that he makes himself and his conditions, according to the tendencies he encourages. The process of such reformation, however, may be a long one. For, tendencies encouraged for ages cannot be cured in a single life-time, but may require ages for their cure. And herein is a reflection to make us as patient towards the faults of others, as it ought to make us impatient of our own.

26. The doctrine of the soul is embodied in the parable of the Talents. Into the soul of the individual is breathed the Spirit of God, divine, pure, and without blemish. It is God. And the individual has, in his earth-life, to nourish

that Spirit and feed it as a flame with oil. When we put oil into a lamp, the essence passes into and becomes flame. So is it with the soul of him who nourishes the Spirit. It grows gradually pure and becomes Spirit. By this spirit the body is enlightened as a lamp by the flame within it. Now, the flame is not the oil, for the oil may be there without the light; yet the flame cannot be there without the oil. The body, then, is the lamp-case, into which the oil is poured; and this, the oil, is the soul, a fine and combustible fluid; and the flame is the Divine Spirit, which is not born of the oil, but is communicated by the hand of God. We may quench this Spirit utterly, and thenceforward we shall have no immortality; but when the lamp-case breaks, the oil will be spilt on the earth, and a few fumes will for a time arise from it, and then it will expend itself, leaving at last no trace. Thus, as in the parable of the Talents, where God has given five talents, man pays back ten; or he pays back nothing, and perishes.

27. Some oils are finer and more combustible than others. The finest is that of the soul of the poet; and in such a medium the flame of God's Spirit burns more clearly and powerfully and brightly, so that sometimes mortal eyes can hardly endure its lustre. Of such a one the soul is filled with holy rapture. He sees as no other man sees; and the atmosphere about him is enkindled. His soul becomes transmuted into flame; and when the lamp of his body is shattered, his flame mounts and soars, and is united to the Divine Fire.[4]

PART IV.

28. We come to treat of that from which the soul of the individual proceeds, and of which it consists. For,

[4] See *C.W.S.*, part. i., No. xliv., at p. 178.

as already observed, it is upon the nature of this that our potentialities depend. Let us, then, for a while, ignoring the universe of *things*, cast our minds backward to the point wherein, prior to Existence, substance necessarily subsists alone and undifferentiate, and pure Being is all.

29. That which subsists before the beginning of things, is necessarily the potentiality of things. This necessarily is homogeneous. As the Substance of things, and pervaded by Life, it is Living Substance; and being homogeneous, it is One. But, consisting of Life and Substance, it is Twain. Constituting the life and substance of Persons, it is necessarily personal; and being self-subsistent, infinite, eternal and personal, it is God; and God is Twain in One. By virtue of the potency of this duality, God subsists and operates. And every monad of God's substance possesses the potency of Twain. Wherever are Life and Substance, there is God. Wherever God is, there is Being; and wherever Being is, there is God; for God is Being. The universe is Existence, that is, God manifested. Prior to the universe, God subsisted unmanifest. Subsistence and Existence, these are the two terms which denote respectively God in God's Self, and God in Creation.

30. Before the beginning of things, the great and invisible God alone subsisted. There was no motion, nor darkness, nor space, nor matter. There was no other than God, the One, the Uncreate, the Self-subsistent, Who subsisted as invisible Light.

31. God is Spirit, God is Life, God is Mind, God is the Subject and Object of mind: at once the thought, the thinker, and that which is thought of. God is positive and personal Being; the potential Essence of all that is or can be; the one and only Self; that alone in the universe which

has the right to say "I." Wherever a Presence is, there is God; and where God is not, is no Being.

32. In God subsist, in absolute plenitude and perfect equilibrium, all qualities and properties which, opposed to and yet corresponding with each other, constitute the elements masculine and feminine of existence. God is perfect will and perfect love, perfect knowledge and perfect wisdom, perfect intelligence and perfect sympathy, perfect justice and perfect mercy, perfect power and perfect goodness. And from God, as original and abstract humanity, proceeds the derived and concrete humanity which, when perfected, manifests God. God is light, truth, order, harmony, reason; and God's works are illumination, knowledge, understanding, love, and sanity. And inasmuch as anything is absolute, strong, perfect, true, insomuch it resembles God and is God. Perfect and complete from eternity, God is beyond possibility of change or development. Development pertains only to the manifestation of God in creation. As God is one, so is God's method one, and without variation or shadow of turning. God works from within outwards; for God's kingdom is within, being interior, invisible, mystic, spiritual. And God's Spirits, the Spirits of the Invisible Light, are Seven:—the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of understanding, the spirit of counsel, the spirit of power, the spirit of knowledge, the spirit of righteousness, and the spirit of divine awfulness. These are the Powers, or Elohim, of God. They are co-equal and co-eternal. Each has in itself the nature of the whole. Each is a perfect entity. Of them all is the whole of God's substance pervaded. And in their individual manifestations they are the Gods.

33. In God, before the beginning, all things visible and invisible were potential; and of God's fulness have we all

received. Before the beginning negation was not. There was no other than God.

34. As Living Substance, God is One. As Life and Substance, God is Twain. HE is the Life, and SHE is the Substance. And to speak of Her, is to speak of Woman in her supremest mode. She is not "Nature"; Nature is the manifestation of the qualities and properties with which, under suffusion of the Life and Spirits of God, Substance is endowed. She is not Matter; but is the potential essence of Matter. She is not Space; but is the *within* of space, its fourth and original dimension, that from which all proceed, the containing element of Deity, and of which space is the manifestation. As original Substance, the substance of all other substances, She underlies that whereof all things are made; and, like life and mind, is interior, mystical, spiritual, and discernible only when manifested in operation. In the Unmanifest, She is the Great Deep, or Ocean, of Infinitude, the Principium or Archë, the heavenly Sophia, or Wisdom, Who encircles and embraces all things; of Whom are dimension and form and appearance; Whose veil is the astral fluid, and Who is, Herself, the substance of all souls.

35. On the plane of manifestation, as the Soul macrocosmic and microcosmic, She appears as the Daughter, Mother, and Spouse of God. Exhibiting in a perfect Humanity the fulness of the life she has received of God, she is mystically styled the Blessed Virgin Mary, and in token of her Divine Motherhood and heavenly derivation and attributes, is represented as clad in celestial azure, and bearing in Her arms the infant Man, in whom, regenerate and reborn of Her own immaculate substance, the universe is redeemed. In Her subsist inherently all the feminine qualities of the Godhead. As Venus, the brightest of the

mystic Seven who represent the Elohim of God, She corresponds to the third, the spirit of counsel, in that counsel is wisdom, and love and wisdom are one. Thus, in mystical art She is portrayed as Aphrodite the Sea-Queen, and Mary the Star of the Sea, and as the soul from whose pure intuition of God proceeds the perfected man. Correspondingly, in mystical science She appears as Sodium, or salt, whose ray in the spectrum, as the place of Venus among the planets, is the third, whose light is the brightest, and whose colour is the yellow. Among the metals, copper is dedicated to Venus. For of copper the crystals are the deep sea-blue. And, inasmuch as She, as love, is the enlightener, and as salt the purifier, and the pure in heart see God, so is its sulphate a balm for ailing eyes. As Pallas or Minerva, She is "Our Lady of Victories," adversary of demons and dragons, wearing the panoply of heaven, and the insignia of wisdom and righteous war. As Isis or Artemis, She is pre-eminently the Initiator, and the Virgin clothed in white, standing on the Moon, and ruling the waters.

36. Also is She "Mother of Sorrows," whose bitterness pervades all things below; and only by her salting with affliction, purification by trial, and purchase of wisdom by dear-bought experience, is the perfection that is of Her attained. Nevertheless She is also "Mother of Joys," since Her light is gilded by the solar rays; and of Her pain and travail as the soul in the individual, comes the regeneration of Her children. And She is for them no more a sea of bitterness when once their warfare with evil has been accomplished; for then is She "our Lady, Glory of the Church triumphant." Thus in the Microcosm.

37. In the Macrocosm She is that Beginning or Wisdom wherein God makes the heavens and the earth; the substantial waters upon whose face He, the Energising Will,

moves at every fresh act of creation, and the ark or womb from which all creatures proceed. And it is through the "gathering together," or coagulation, of Her "waters," that the "dry land" of the earth or body, which is Matter, appears. For She is that spiritual substance which, polarising interiorly, is—in the innermost—God; and coagulating exteriorly, becomes—in the outermost—Matter. And She, again, it is, who as the soul of humanity, regaining full intuition of God, overwhelms the earth with a flood of Her waters, destroying the evil and renewing the good, and bearing unharmed on Her bosom the elect few who have suffered Her to build them up in the true image of God. Thus to these is She "Mother of the Living."

38. And as, on the plane physical, man is not Man—but only Boy, rude, froward, and solicitous only to exert and exhibit his strength—until the time comes for him to recognise, appreciate, and appropriate Her as the woman; so on the plane spiritual, man is not Man—but only Materialist, having all the deficiencies, intellectual and moral, the term implies—until the time comes for him to recognise, appreciate, and appropriate Her as the Soul, and, counting Her as his better half, to renounce his own exclusively centrifugal impulsions, and yield to Her centripetal attractions. Doing this with all his heart, he finds that She makes him, in the highest sense, Man. For, adding to his intellect Her intuition, She endows him with that true manhood, the manhood of Mind. Thus, by Her aid obtaining cognition of substance, and from the phenomenal fact ascending to the essential idea, he weds understanding to knowledge, and attains to certitude of truth, completing thereby the system of his thought.

39. Rejecting, as this age has done, the soul and her intuition, man excludes from the system of his humanity the